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THE Public Interest

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Looking back to 1965

GEORGE F. WILL

THERE never has been an uneventful year in American history. How could there be? This nation, continental in scope and creedal in nature, is congenitally restless and constantly improvising. But rarely has there been a year eventful in the way 1965 was. That year was the hinge of our postwar history. The prestige of government, and government's confidence, not to say hubris, were at apogees. They were higher than at any time since 1945, and arguably higher than at any time since government came here with the first colonists on their errand into the American wilderness. In the autumn of 1965, that year that was the incubator of so many of our current controversies, *The Public Interest* was born. In the nick of time. There was a whirlwind in the White House and whirl was about to become king.

The first issue of this journal appeared in the first week of October. The front pages of the *New York Times* that week reported Fidel Castro's revelation that Che Guevara had left Cuba earlier in the year for what Castro called "a new field of

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battle in the struggle against imperialism." Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara announced that U.S. forces in Vietnam—there had been no combat troops there when the year began—numbered 130,000 and might be increased. Republican leaders, still smarting from the anti-Goldwater landslide of the previous November, denied any connection between their party and the John Birch Society. At the Statue of Liberty, President Johnson signed a bill liberalizing immigration: A society assured of a future characterized by surplus could afford to be welcoming. In Crawfordville, Georgia, state troopers turned away black children as they tried to board buses bound for all-white schools.

The most popular movie was *The Sound of Music* and the most watched television program was "Bonanza": folk singers and cowboys practicing what would come to be called family values. One of the year's most popular songs was Frank Sinatra's ballad "It Was a Very Good Year." For those for whom the going was especially good, a six-room duplex on Fifth Avenue in the 1960s could be had for $575 a month. Even an IBM keypunch operator could make as much as $90 a week. Another very popular song—decidedly no ballad—was the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction." But that song was about girls, not politics.

LBJ's opportunity

It was a year in which the 8 percent growth of GNP drove the Dow Jones average to 969, with negligible inflation (1.6 percent) and essentially full employment (the unemployment rate was 4.5 percent). It was a year of immense satisfaction to the president who bestrode Washington and was causing that city to supplant New York, where *The Public Interest* was published until 1987, as the focus of national attention. After *The Public Interest* moved to Washington, Irving Kristol, its co-editor, wrote, "New York may not be what it used to be, but we understand that Washington is not yet what it might be." If in 1965 Washington was not the nation's steering wheel and accelerator, that wasn't for want of trying by Lyndon Johnson.

In 1965 Lyndon Johnson was in a hurry. On the fourth of January, 16 days before his Inauguration, he stood at the ros-

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trum of the House of Representatives announcing "the excitement of great expectations." Woodrow Wilson, the first president to provide a theory for the modern presidency as uniquely qualified interpreter of the public's unarticulated yearnings and unrecognized needs, had, fittingly, been the first president since Jefferson actually to go to Congress to deliver a State of the Union message. Johnson, characteristically, would do more than that. Stephen Gettinger of Congressional Quarterly notes that in 1965 Johnson became the first president to deliver a State of the Union address to a national prime-time television audience. There was a time when virtually all presidential communication was addressed to the legislative branch, not to the public at large. But that had changed, especially since the coming of broadcasting, and the use made of it by Franklin Roosevelt, who was president when Johnson first came to Washington as a Capitol Hill staffer. The legislative branch was no longer enough of an audience.

Besides, the legislative branch arrayed before Johnson that night was, he had every right to think, his poodle. It had been decisively shaped by the 1964 election, which presumably had forever settled the hash of a certain strand of conservatism—the Southern and Southwestern sort that spoke anachronistically of a federal government of limited, delegated, and enumerated powers. That conservatism had been ridden into the sunset and out of history by Barry Goldwater, the "cheerful malcontent." His was the ideology of a minority that was not at all cheerful. That minority believed that the government was becoming oppressive. But Johnson's 61 percent of the vote indicated that that minority did not much matter. Sixty-eight of 100 senators and 295 of 435 representatives were Democrats. House Democrats took away the seniority of two of their Southern colleagues who had supported Goldwater. Best to nip in the bud any Southern flirtation with the Republican party. (The punishment may have fit the crime, but it was not a success as a deterrent. In the South, in every election since 1964, Republican candidates for House seats have received more votes than in the preceding election, and Democratic candidates have received fewer.)

Johnson is the only president (his successor, Richard Nixon, came close) who spent virtually his entire adult life in Wash-

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ington. Marinated in the culture of government, and the first Southern president elected since the Civil War, Johnson understood what the swollen ranks of Democrats meant: For the first time since 1938, the Democratic congressional party was no longer hostage to its Southern contingent. In 1938, when Johnson was a Texas freshman congressman, he had seen Roosevelt rebuked in the congressional elections, partly as a reaction against his plan to "pack" the Supreme Court by enlarging it. Between 1939 and 1965, coalitions of Republicans and Southern Democrats could, more often than not, prevent the ascendancy of a liberal legislating majority. Now, at last, liberalism had something elusive and evanescent—unlimited opportunity. Thirty years later, liberalism would still be struggling to recover from the use its adherents made of their opportunity.

Stephen Gettinger writes that Congress took no recesses that year as it responded to 63 formal presidential messages. In October, Johnson would declare it the greatest session of Congress in history. Not everyone was enthralled. Goldwater called it "the Xerox Congress" and Representative Mel Laird of Wisconsin, chairman of the House Republican Conference, said, "Unless the legislative branch stands for something more than a rubber stamp, it is not Republicans who will be a minority; it will be the entire Congress, dwarfed and dragooned by a great and overbearing executive branch." Thirty years later, the presidency is a miniaturized and marginalized office in a Washington dominated by the Republican Speaker of the House—the strongest speaker since Johnson's friend Sam Rayburn. When the country decided it wanted less energetic government, it—with a large assist from the end of the Cold War—caused energy to flow from the executive to Capitol Hill.

Judicial actions and reactions

Actually, in spite of Congress's year of hyperkinesis in 1965, both political branches were then in the process of being somewhat marginalized by the judiciary. It is arguable that, since the 1954 school-desegregation ruling, the Supreme Court has been the most important institution shaping the evolution of American society. In 1965 the Court lit a fuse that would

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lead in eight years to an explosion that still rocks American politics.

In 1965, in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut*, the Court ruled unconstitutional an unenforced Connecticut law banning the use of contraceptives or the giving of advice about their use. The case was ginned up with the help of several liberal organizations, perhaps to get the Court to strike a blow for advanced thinking in general. The Warren Court never had to be asked twice to do that. However, in this case, the Court did rather more than that. And in yet another demonstration of the Law of Unintended Consequences, its ruling ignited a political force that the people who liked the ruling did not consider at all advanced in its thinking.

It is reported that, when the justices met in conference to begin deliberations about *Griswold*, Chief Justice Warren said he favored striking down the law but did not—yet—have a theory of why, exactly, the law was unconstitutional. The prime movers behind the challenge to the law—the director of the Planned Parenthood League and the league's New Haven center—said the law violated their First Amendment right of association. To Justice Black, a sturdy friend of the First Amendment, this was a bit thick: "The right of association is for me a right of assembly and the right of the husband and wife to assemble in bed is a new right of assembly for me." Not to worry. The Warren Court operated on the principle of first deciding what is right and what is wrong and then finding a constitutional pretext for doing good works. In his opinion for the majority, Justice William Douglas said the Connecticut law was unconstitutional because it offended against a "right of privacy," which, although not mentioned in the Constitution, was there anyway because "specific guarantees in the Bill of Rights have penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees that help give them life and substance." Armed with emanating penumbras, what could not the Court do?

What it did in 1973 with that 1965 emanation was *Roe* v. *Wade*. That struck down laws regulating abortion in all 50 states. That irritated some people who, in their irritation, rose from their church pews and became something few of them had hitherto been: politically active. The "evangelicals," a.k.a. "the Christian Right," were on the way. By the time of *Roe* v.

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Wade, states with 40 percent of the nation's population had liberalized their abortion laws. A national debate was underway, giving satisfaction to those who desired change and reconciling others to change through democratic debate and compromise. The Court short-circuited this process, leaving millions of Americans feeling disenfranchised regarding an issue of the highest moral sensitivity. Some of the seeds of the revolt against Washington, the source of such judicial thunderbolts, were sown by the 1965 "right-of-privacy" decision.

The arrival of the elites

Perhaps there was among liberals a sense of the perishable nature of their 1965 ascendancy in Congress. Perhaps they sensed that this was apt to be a final flaring of their persuasion. For whatever reason, the creation in 1965 of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) was congruent with the turn of liberalism away from legislation and toward litigation as the preferred instrument of social change. Created by a Democratic Congress, at the behest of a Democratic president, in the name of the central Democratic value, compassion, the LSC became a battering ram for reformers to use against the policies of Democratic mayors across the country. Welfare policies, housing policies, school policies—in an era when rights are trumps, the litigious idealist's work is never done. An organization like the LSC, funded by Washington and used largely to force enlightenment on "unresponsive" public officials, aimed not merely to succor the poor, but to arouse them. Against whom? Why, against those closest at hand—mayors, city councils, school boards, public-housing authorities, police departments. These good works added to the irritation quotient of people who would in time be called Reagan Democrats.

Ronald Reagan, who became a Republican pinup in 1964 by virtue of one nationally televised speech for Goldwater, spent 1965 driving himself around California, deciding whether or not to run for governor. As he went from one question-and-answer forum to another, one thing particularly puzzled him: "This university thing comes up each time I talk." That thing, which he came to call "the mess at Berkeley," was a leading indicator of the widening cultural and social distance

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between the intelligentsia and the country. Soon the former would adopt an adversarial stance toward the latter. But, in 1965, intellectuals were not yet in their full alienation pose. They had not yet decided that President Johnson was a genocidal imperialist and, worse, vulgar. He craved their approval and was willing to give them his attention, or that of his aides, such as Joseph Califano.

In July 1965, Califano, just turned 34, joined the White House staff. He joined it the week the president decided on the major escalation in Vietnam. Never mind. There would be money enough for guns and butter and Masterpiece Theater. On December 29, 1965, Califano led the President through a book titled "The Great Society—A Second Year Legislative Program." It was a loose-leaf book. It had to be, with so many new ideas coming in all the time from campuses and foundations. The intelligentsia was constantly being urged to send ideas for ways the federal government could spend the dangerous fiscal surplus that, if unspent, would become a drag on the economy. The year had seen the creation of, among many other things, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting was just two years over the horizon. The keepers of the nation's culture would surely be grateful.

Califano's loose-leaf book was a manifestation of something limned by Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the first article in the first issue of *The Public Interest*, "The Professionalization of Reform." The pressure for government-driven social change was not coming from large constituencies out in the country, "beyond the Beltway." (That is what America would come to be called in years after the Washington Beltway was opened in 1964.) Rather, the pressure was coming from elites who thought of reform as their sovereign vocation. Wrote Moynihan in that first issue:

> War on poverty was not declared at the behest of the poor.... The poor were not only invisible ... they were also for the most part silent. John F. Kennedy ventured into Appalachia searching for Protestant votes, not for poverty.... the war on poverty began not because it was necessary (which it was), but because it was possible.

One price that would be paid for the professionalization of

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reform, wrote Moynihan, would be "a decline in the moral exhilaration of public affairs at the domestic level." But that would be a small price to pay for a consummation as devoutly desired as the one Moynihan thought possible:

> The prospect that the more primitive social issues of American politics are at last to be resolved need only mean that we may now turn to issues more demanding of human ingenuity than that of how to put an end to poverty in the richest nation in the world.

Well. Perhaps Moynihan was assuming that we would know what to do about the subject of something else he wrote about in 1965, in his report, published by the Department of Labor, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." More about that anon.

The day Califano was showing that loose-leaf book to the president, the issue of *Time* magazine that was on the newsstands had on its cover a picture of a dead white European male. An economist: Keynes. The news, so to speak, was that we had mastered the management of the modern capitalist economy. Business cycles had been, as it were, repealed. Guaranteed economic growth would guarantee a constant gusher of revenues to government at constant tax rates.

(Constant rates, yes, but there would still be surreptitious tax increases because of "bracket creep" as inflation floated people into higher taxes. At least there would be until 1981. Then, in what was arguably Ronald Reagan's most consequential fiscal act—more consequential, because less easily repealed, than his tax cuts—Reagan, as a final trump in his bidding war with a Democratic Congress that was also hot to cut taxes, endorsed indexing the tax code.)

In 1965, the guaranteed gusher of revenues, in excess of existing government needs, seemed to mean that for the foreseeable future—a long time, presumably; we were getting awfully good at seeing the future—the political problem would be to allocate government surpluses equitably. Government had better look lively about putting in place programs to allocate those surpluses. Otherwise they would exert that "fiscal drag" on the economy. Government had an urgent duty to pump out money in order to pump up demand. So politics was going to be the disbursement of pleasures. What fun.

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The fun was well underway in 1965. Medicare was passed. Harry Truman attended the signing ceremony for this idea of his (and of others) whose time had at long last come. There was a new Department of Housing and Urban Development to think up uses for surpluses. This would guarantee that our alabaster cities would gleam undimmed by human tears. There was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, too. This measure completed the erasure of the last trace of a distinction between federal responsibilities and state and local responsibilities. The federal government may have begun as a government of limited, delegated, and enumerated powers, but in 1965 it put away that idea as it entered the local schoolhouse. It soon would do so regarding another (or so it had long been thought) quintessentially local responsibility: crime. In May 1965, for the first time in its experience, the Gallup polling organization found crime ranked with education as the most important national problem. Odd, such evidence of a pervasive sense of national fraying at this moment of a quickstep march toward progress on so many fronts. What could it mean? Probably regnant racism, something else for Washington to correct.

Crime figured in one picaresque political event in 1965. When New York City Republicans nominated the very liberal Congressman John Lindsay to run for mayor, William F. Buckley ran as the nominee of the Conservative party. Asked what would be the first thing he would do if he won, Buckley said, "Demand a recount." He did not need to. But his campaign did give voice to those New Yorkers who were incensed about a proposed civilian review board to monitor the city's police. Law and order was on many minds. To other minds, the words "law and order" were "code words" for racism.

In black and white

But in 1965, one hundred years after Appomattox, it was possible to believe that the American dilemma of race was being resolved, that the civil-rights agenda was virtually fulfilled. From March 9 to March 25, the march from Selma (a town 58 percent black, where 3 percent of the voters were black) to Montgomery had held the nation's attention. The Edmund Pettus Bridge became a station of the cross for the

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civil-rights movement when Sheriff Jim Clark led an assault on the marchers. On the evening of March 25, a Michigan woman, Viola Liuzzo, who had been driving marchers back to Selma, was riddled with bullets from a passing car. She was not the only person murdered. The Reverend James Reeb, a Boston minister, had been beaten to death in Selma by five whites. All this occurred in the living rooms of a nation now wired for television. On May 26 the Senate passed the Voting Rights Act, 77-19.

That was to be one of the transforming acts of twentieth-century government. In 1964, in the 11 states of the former Confederacy, there were 1.5 million blacks registered to vote. By 1969, there were 3.1 million. In 1963, there had been fewer than 100 black elected officials in all of the South. By 1973, there were 191 in Mississippi alone. Signing the Act on August 6, 1965, the President said, "Today we strike away the last major shackle of those fierce and ancient bonds [of slavery]." With access to the ballot box assured and politics becoming a career open to talents, surely the sunlit uplands of racial harmony were at hand.

Five nights after that signing ceremony, in the Watts section of Los Angeles, a white police officer arrested an unemployed 21-year-old black man he suspected of drunk driving. The suspect's mother verbally abused the officer. A crowd gathered. Rocks were thrown. The next night, and for four more nights, there was rioting that left 44 dead.

Perhaps the striking of that last major shackle would not suffice after all. In fact, the President had said as much two months earlier. On June 4, in a speech at Howard University, he had warned: "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, 'You're free to compete with others,' and justly believe that you have been fair." So: blacks might have all the shackles struck from them and still remain "hobbled." Blacks were to be thought of as a group, a group defined by victimization. And by passivity: they were to be "taken" toward progress. The taking would be the white person's burden. From that premise, a policy with many names was born. It was called "compensatory opportunity" as well as affirmative action in the 1976 Democratic platform. And it

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had unintended consequences. It became a facet of identity politics organized around grievance groups and an agenda for redefining America. Where Lincoln had seen a nation "dedicated to a proposition," others now saw not really a nation at all but a simmering "multicultural" stew of groups defined by ethnicity and dedicated to maneuvering for social space and ethnic entitlements.

What Socrates knew

President Johnson's Howard speech followed by two months the publication of the Moynihan report on the crisis in the black family. This was an early harbinger of the arguments of 1995. It suggested—actually, it just allowed the thought—that what the needy need most, and first, are not material things that government can give. Not housing, not jobs, not income maintenance. Maybe what is fundamental is not material. Maybe it is society's moral economy, for the explanation and regulation of which no Keynes has come forward.

The crisis of which Moynihan wrote in 1965 was an illegitimacy rate of 26 percent. That was just four percentage points higher than the white illegitimacy rate would be in 1990, when the black illegitimacy rate would be 68 percent and that of American society as a whole would be 30 percent. By the mid-1990s, it would be predictable—knowable—that, by the year 2000, the rate for minorities would be approximately 80 percent and for society as a whole 40 percent. That would be about all we did know about this. What caused it? What can be done about it? No one quite knows.

Some people think they do. They think government has got the incentives wrong. They think work is natural, meaning universally desired, and so if people drop out of the labor force, getting them back in should be a manageable problem. In 1995, many people believe that tinkering with welfare payments will decisively alter the incentives for having babies and, hence, will alter the sexual behavior of welfare recipients. (As the Duke of Wellington said to the man who approached him and said, "Mr. Smith, I believe?"—"If you can believe that, you can believe anything.") This faith in behavior modification by means of fine-tuning incentives may be the last remnant—the almost undiscernibly faint trace—of utopian

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thinking at the end of the millennium: Incentives, particularly monetary ones, make the world go 'round. They do because human beings are simple materialists making predictable, manipulable calculations. But of course people are not.

Thirty years after the Moynihan report, there is an exhilarating sense of not knowing as much as we thought we did, and could. That fact, that the nation is not unnerved by not knowing, is among the encouraging results of the years that *The Public Interest* has been with us. And it is, to some extent, one of the results of *The Public Interest*. That journal's pages repeatedly have given its readers the pleasurable shock of nonrecognition—of seeing that the world is not as we have been used to seeing it. In the first issue, Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol said, "The past decade of American history is just chock full of Great Debates that never happened." Thirty years on, an insufficiency of debates about fundamentals is one problem that has been alleviated—perhaps because so few other problems have been. Is that progress? It is progress's precondition, which is a fine description of *The Public Interest* itself.

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A social conservative credo

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

IT is an axiom of the conservative revolution sweeping Washington that the growth in size and power of the welfare state is a primary cause of the decline of society's mediating institutions—voluntary associations, local government, church, and, above all, the family, the single most important instrument of social cohesion and values transmission. Whether by design or inadvertence, the nanny state has taken over the house.

Welfare policy, for example, creates social chaos by means of governmental incentives that are almost comically perverse. Every teenage girl in the country is told: Have a child, make sure it is out of wedlock, make sure you have no job or prospects, and Washington will then guarantee you a monthly check, free medical care, and years of job training and child care, also free. After 35 years of this, the illegitimacy rate goes from 5 percent to 30 percent. Surprise.

Liberals are confounded by the fact that the great expansion of their social programs coincides with the dramatic rise

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of most every index of social breakdown—divorce, illegitimacy, violence, crime, drug abuse, suicide, untreated mental illness (disguised as homelessness). Lacking any new theory to explain this unfortunate association, they prescribe the only therapy their worldview allows: more social programs.

President Clinton, in his 1995 State of the Union Address, for example, embraced a Charles Murray premise when he declared that "the epidemic of teen pregnancies and births where there is no marriage" is "our most serious social problem." His conclusion, however, is distinctly un-Murray-like: yet another federal program. After drivers ed. and drug ed., we shall now have preg ed.—a few minutes of classroom time to urge young girls and boys not to do precisely what the entire welfare system allows, indeed encourages, them to do: indulge in irresponsible childbearing.

The limits of structural reform

The conservative response is equally clear: not a new government intervention to mitigate the catastrophic consequences of the old intervention but withdrawal of government intervention in the first place. The contraction of the welfare state is the single most important theme of the current conservative revolution. It imbues practically every item on the Republicans' political agenda. And it promises a rosy future: Pare back the welfare state and the mediating institutions will once again have the space to flower, reclaiming their rightful place at the center of a revitalized civil society.

It is a rosy scenario. It is unlikely to materialize. Social disintegration is not a reversible chemical reaction. It is far easier to reduce a complex, cohesive social structure to its barest elements of atomized individuals and fractured families than to reassemble these atoms and fractions into a new whole. Institutions so displaced and broken, particularly the family, may not be capable of spontaneous reintegration.

This is not to say that one should flinch from trying. But in, say, abolishing the current welfare entitlement, one should not assume that this in and of itself will solve the conundrum of intergenerational illegitimacy. Abolition is the first step, because without it there is no way back from where we are. But it is only a first step. And, if it is the only step, the

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current conservative revolution will surely fail.

That is the case because looking at the effect of government on society is too limited an analysis. The intrusions and expropriations of the welfare state have, generally speaking, created the *sustaining* conditions that allow the breakdown of families and other mediating institutions. They establish a *structure* that underwrites self-destructive and antisocial behavior. But they do not create the wants and the values that find their expression in such behavior. The epidemic of teen pregnancy, for example, is fueled by the desire of boys for predatory and casual sex, the acquiescence (often encouragement) of girls, and the contempt of both for the bourgeois norm of settled, married parenthood. Where do these attitudes come from? The AFDC check permits their realization. But it hardly creates them. What does?

Cultural causes of decay

The single greatest shaper of these wants and values is not government but culture. Mass culture is a very recent phenomenon. As an engine of social breakdown, it is vastly underappreciated by those who might be called structural conservatives. Those who believe, for example, that changing the tax structure of the inner city (through enterprise zones) will effect a radical transformation of its social dynamics are missing the larger reality. Never in history have the purveyors of a degraded, almost totally uncensored, culture had direct, unmediated access to the minds of a society's young. An adolescent plugged into a Walkman playing "gangsta rap" represents a revolutionary social phenomenon: youthful consciousness almost literally hardwired to the most extreme and corrupting cultural influences.

Two hundred years ago these influences might reach a thin layer of the upper classes, classes well insulated by education, social code, and sheer wealth from the more baleful consequences of cultural decay. Today these influences reach everyone. Particularly vulnerable are those in communities where the authority structure has disintegrated because of absent or incompetent parents and where there is no power or money or codes to mediate the culture's influence or cushion its effects. In such a milieu in particular—everywhere to some

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extent—mass culture rules. The results are plain to see.

We have, for example, a quarter century of psychological research on the relationship between exposure to television violence and aggressive behavior. The findings are summarized by the 1972 Surgeon General's Commission report, the 1982 National Institute of Health Ten Year Follow-Up, and the 1992 report of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Media in Society. To quote Leonard Eron, a longtime student of media and its psychological effects, on the question of the relation between television and increased violence, "the scientific debate is over." One could, of course, have done without the social science and simply reasoned, as Irving Kristol did in 1971, that if the unquestioningly held view that good art can elevate is true, then it must be equally true that bad art can degrade.

The defenders of the culture argue that their art merely reflects already existing social changes. One could, for the sake of argument, concede that point and still note that, by constantly validating and confirming disintegratory social trends, these cultural purveyors are legitimizing them and establishing a feedback system that only serves to reinforce, amplify, and accelerate the chaos.

Mainstream films aimed at young people, for example, specialize not just in glorifying violence but in trivializing it. Cruelty as camp is a staple of the PG-13 movie. MTV is a festival of misogyny, a sourcebook on the degradation and objectification of women. And ordinary prime-time television is a laboratory of "alternative lifestyles." It has been pointed out, for example, that the typical sitcom family (with one or two notable exceptions) is what in the 1950s was called a broken home. And these homes—Murphy Brown's, most famously—are not generally depicted as unfortunate accommodations to the sadder consequences of social disintegration but as self-affirming choices worthy of not just admiration but celebration. What is forgotten about the Murphy Brown episode is that real, live television anchors from NBC, CBS, ABC, and CNN went on the show to toast Murphy's motherhood.

Dan Quayle's attack on the breezy, brazen amorality at play here restarted the current national debate about the cultural

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causes of social decay. Even the most established liberal voices had been coming to grudging acknowledgment of the fact that much of the rampant deviancy in society is learned, and learned mostly from the mass media. Take, for example, the National Commission on Children, chaired by Senator Jay Rockefeller, liberal Democrat from West Virginia, and generally given to the standard establishment analyses and recommendations. It acknowledged that "pervasive images of crime, violence, and sexuality expose children and youth to situations and problems that often conflict with the common values of our society," and even ceded that "the media, especially television" might actually be "a cause" of "our society's serious problems."

The medicalization of vice

Liberals have a serious difficulty dealing with this reality, however. It is hard for them—note the commission's pinched, bureaucratic formulation—to say the obvious: the culture's art is bad, its messages morally wrong. Why? Because having promoted "value-free" education and a self-validating moral relativism, they have forfeited the language of morality.

Accordingly, they have had to resort to a substitute language: medicine. Medicalized morality has the twin advantages of appearing authoritative and value-free. Liberalism can now address the problem of cultural decay thus: We cannot say what's right or wrong, good or bad, but we can say what is harmful. Hence, sexual promiscuity is to be eschewed not because it is wrong but because it is "risky," a risk to limb and life, as is drug abuse and the like. The right sex is safe sex. Teen violence is a "public health emergency." And the man to lead the fight against teen pregnancy is a doctor, the Surgeon General. He did such a good job with smoking. Why not with sex?

To be sure, some liberals have so rejected the connection between morality and social breakdown that they are reluctant to apply even the smoking model to allegedly immoral behavior. President Clinton's first Surgeon General, Jocelyn Elders, was so sanguine about teen sex that she wanted it taught. ("We've taught children in driver's ed. what to do in the front seat of a car but not what to do in the back seat of the car.") She was so reconciled to drug use that she spoke favorably of

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legalization. But she was, at the same time, a ferocious enemy of tobacco. She was quite reconciled to kids having sex in the back seat of a car, it seems, so long as they did not light up afterwards.

But such views are no longer politically sustainable, even in a Democratic administration. Accordingly, in making Dr. Henry Foster his subsequent choice for Surgeon General, Clinton played the neo-liberal, promoting Foster as just the man to fight teen pregnancy.

This is an advance, a recognition that teen pregnancy and illegitimacy are social pathologies in need of a campaign to change behavior and attitudes. But, by assigning the job to doctors, by framing the issue in terms of public health, by confusing morality with hygiene, the point is missed.

Yes, the victims of teen violence, promiscuity, drug abuse, and suicide end up in the emergency room. But so do the victims of hurricanes and war. Hurricanes and war are many things, but they are not medical problems. Neither are teen violence, promiscuity, drug abuse, suicide, and the other indices of social decay. Moreover, when you appeal to the vulnerable young to avoid these behaviors on the purely self-regarding health grounds that they are risking damage to themselves, you are preaching to a constituency that is not apt to buy your cost-benefit calculations.

Virtue's return

The medicalization of vice—the campaigns for safe this and safe that—has gone as far as it can go, and that is not very far. The result is that we are seeing a "remoralization," if not of society, at least of language. Encouraged by such books as William Bennett's *The Book of Virtues*, Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The De-Moralization of Society*, and James Q. Wilson's *The Moral Sense*, the frank use of the old-fashioned language of virtue is making a comeback.

Establishment discourse has been forced to readmit moral categories into the debate about social decay and deviancy. The change is visible and rapid. One can almost chart it by comparing the reception accorded Dan Quayle's 1992 assault on Murphy Brown and that given Bob Dole's on Time Warner and Hollywood just three years later. Quayle was pummeled

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by establishment media. The response to Dole was: Why aren't the Democrats saying this too?

This represents a significant advance in two respects. First, it legitimizes the use of frankly moral language in public discourse. Second, it legitimizes the deployment of that language against the purveyors of culture and the holding of them to certain standards of decency.

This engagement in the cultural war is a necessary complement to the "structural" conservative attempts to rein in the welfare state. Reining in the state creates civil space open to new influences. But the cultural agenda—and particularly the attempt to force the mass media to clean up their act and alter their message—will crucially determine what gets to fill that space.

In the absence of religion

But even that will not be enough. Culture wars, however satisfying and necessary, are not sufficient. If there is to be a remoralization of society, it will have to occur at the level not just of supply but of demand. Getting the culture producers to limit the toxicity of their products will not be that difficult. Even without overt government censorship, political and popular pressure are quite capable of inducing the culture creators to self-censorship.

In a free-market society, however, such supply-side changes are not enough. The failure of the war on drugs should have taught us that. The producers of culture may accede temporarily to political demands for self-censorship out of fear or regard for public relations. But a more enduring change in the cultural market, as in any other, awaits a fundamental change in demand. The customer has to stop buying the stuff.

And where does that come from? We now leave the realm of governmental reform and media self-censorship and enter entirely new territory, religious territory. Irving Kristol has written about the current and coming religious revival as an echo of earlier Great Awakenings. There certainly is a religious revival under way, and it does establish a basis for a most fundamental reversal of social decay. But I have my doubts about the firmness and permanence of this *fin de siècle* awakening.

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This is an age of advanced science and material abundance. Science and abundance offer invitations to skepticism and pleasure that are hard to refuse. It is difficult for me to believe that in such an era, a self-abnegating religious revival will prevail.

I hope I am wrong. If I am, the conservative revolution will unfold in and of itself, with near-Marxist historic inevitability. It is the task of the political strategist, however, to prepare for the possibility that the Great Awakening is not at hand. In which case the arrest of social decay, the revitalization of civil society, is a far more difficult and chancy proposition. It must then depend upon the more coercive and less reliable agency of politics—a politics crucially capable of articulating cultural with structural reform. Neither alone will suffice.

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The professionalization of reform II

DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN

THIRTY years ago, in the first article of the first issue of *The Public Interest*, I published some observations on "The Professionalization of Reform," which 30 years later can be read, selectively, without overmuch embarrassment. The essay began with a passage from Wesley C. Mitchell, who had been for near quarter a century (1920-1945) director of research at the National Bureau of Economic Research, then based at Columbia University.

> Our best hope for the future lies in the extension to social organization of the methods that we already employ in our most progressive fields of effort. In science and in industry ... we do not wait for catastrophe to force new ways upon us.... We rely, and with success, upon quantitative analysis to point the way; and we advance because we are constantly improving and applying such analysis.

This in turn was taken from a report on "The Concept of Poverty," published by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States.

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Then, as ever, I was writing from my experience as informed by the insights of Nathan Glazer who, two years earlier in the British journal *The New Society*, had described the process as it crested in the Kennedy administration.

> Without benefit of anything like the Beveridge report to spark and focus public discussion and concern, the United States is passing through a stage of enormous expansion in the size and scope of what we may loosely call the social services—the public programs designed to help people adapt to an increasingly complex and unmanageable society. While Congress has been painfully and hesitantly trying to deal with two great measures—tax reform and a civil rights bill—and its deliberations on both have been closely covered by the mass media, it has also been working with much less publicity on a number of bills which will contribute at least as much to changing the shape of American society.

I had served as Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Planning and Research in the Kennedy years and had carried on under Johnson. In the article, I cited examples of such legislation that the Department of Labor had helped shape. The Manpower Development and Training Act, the Area Redevelopment Act, the Community Mental Health Construction Act. As regards the latter, I was very much the initiate, having been present at the meeting in the Governor's office in Albany in the spring of 1955 when the new Governor Averell Harriman agreed to the proposal of Paul Hoch, his new Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, to use the first clinically tested tranquilizer, reserpine, on a system-wide basis. This in turn led to the notion that a great number of the mentally ill need not be confined to mental hospitals but could live independently and be cared for at community mental-health centers. Kennedy had created a cabinet committee for which I wrote the final report. We were to build 2,000 such centers by 1980. The President approved the bill on October 31, 1963, his last public bill-signing ceremony. He gave me a pen.

Deinstitutionalization, as it would be called, was altogether the work of professionals, mediated by lawyers and the odd sort such as I. The public never knew anything was much changing. I continued:

> the most interesting thing about all this sudden expansion of social services was that it had behind it, as Glazer noted, "noth-

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> ing like the powerful political pressure and long-sustained intellectual support that produced the great welfare measures of the New Deal—Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Public Welfare, Public Housing." The "massive political support and intellectual leadership that produced the reforms of the thirties" simply did not exist; yet the reforms were moving forward.

The Johnson War on Poverty was the most dramatic example of professionalization. It began with various initiatives designed to help the Appalachian region. Again, the Department of Labor was much involved on behalf of workers, but with little involvement from workers themselves. I commented:

> War on poverty was not declared at the behest of the poor. Just the opposite. The poor were not only invisible ... they were also for the most part silent. John F. Kennedy ventured into Appalachia searching for Protestant votes, not for poverty. There he encountered the incredible pauperization of the mountain people, most particularly the soft coal miners, an industrial work force whose numbers had been reduced by nearly two-thirds in the course of a decade—but with hardly a sound of protest. The miners were desperately poor, shockingly unemployed, but neither radical nor in any significant way restive.

As for miners, so for the public at large. The early sixties, whatever else, were prosperous. But closer analysis, again at the Department of Labor (we *were* good), had shown all manner of trouble brewing.

> Whereas the public, both high and low in the intellectual hierarchy, saw income distribution steadily compressing, saw the Negro American more and more winning his rightful place in society, saw prosperity spreading through the land, the men in the government saw something quite different: an income distribution gap that had not budged since the end of the war, and had in fact worsened sharply for Negroes, a rising measure of social disorganization among poor families and poor communities, a widening gap between the prospects of the poor and those of the middle class.[1]

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[1] At the Policy Planning staff of the Department of Labor, we had indeed picked up the first tremors of "a rising measure of social disorganization among poor families and poor communities." Thirty years later this would be a subject at, or near to, the center of domestic politics. If there is a better case for professionalization, none comes readily to mind. On the other hand, there was, at the time, almost no popular perception of anything amiss, and the proposition received a decidedly mixed reception. I leave it to my betters to judge, but we

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Econometric revolution

I broke off at this point to try to account for all this energy in the executive. First, "The Economic Revolution," next, "The Professionalization of the Middle Class," finally, "The Exponential Growth of Knowledge." The latter two subjects are self-evident enough, although it is useful to keep in mind just how recent most social statistics are. But the great event had been the economic revolution. There had occurred "a genuine discontinuity, a true break with the past. Men are learning how to make an industrial economy work.... Nothing like it has ever happened before in history." The "central political issue of most industrial nations over the past century and a half" had been how to do this. Not two decades earlier it was widely held to be impossible. Then professionalism took over.

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may have an instance here of what Joseph A. Schumpeter termed the "decomposition" of bourgeois society attendant on its very success. The relentless rationality of capitalism will, he conjectured, "eventually kill its roots," which is to say, in Eugene D. Genovese's words, the "pre-capitalist institutions and values necessary for social and political stability." Thus, Chapter XIV of *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*:

> Still more important however is another "internal cause," viz., the disintegration of the bourgeois family. The facts to which I am referring are too well known to need explicit statement. To men and women in modern capitalist societies, family life and parenthood mean less than they meant before and hence are less powerful molders of behavior; the rebellious son or daughter who professes contempt for "Victorian" standards is, however incorrectly, expressing an undeniable truth. The weight of these facts is not impaired by our inability to measure them statistically.

To anticipate, we had begun to get a statistical fix on the subject.

In *The Public Interest*, Winter 1968, I would publish an article, "The Crises in Welfare," which included this passage:

> In general, many persons active in the civil-rights movements, as in most social-reform efforts in recent American history, bring to the undertaking a considerable disenchantment with the traditional "middle-class" values of the society. Although they are likely to be—or because they are—the products of quite successful families, ideas of family stability and morality tend to be seen by such persons as part of the bourgeois *apparat*. And they say to hell with it. Thus, a recent article on Harlem in the *Urban Review*, published by the Center for Urban Education in New York City, spoke with scorn of "Victorian notions about broken homes." Somehow or other, the idea that sexual repression is bad has gotten mixed up with the idea that illegitimacy, or whatever, is good. In a curious way, the more liberated youth of the present seem to be affected by a culture lag of sorts: The newest and best thinking about such matters is considerably more respectful of the "nuclear family" than they seem to know. Or care to know.

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> In the beginning was the theory. With but little data either to support or confound them, economic theories multiplied and conflicted. But gradually more and better data accumulated: progress begins on social problems when it becomes possible to measure them. As the data accumulated and technology made it possible to calculate more rapidly, the theories gradually became able to explain more, and these in turn led to the improvement in the data. John Maynard Keynes at King's College, Cambridge, and Wesley C. Mitchell at the National Bureau of Economic Research in New York are supremely good symbols of the two processes that ended up in a deeply symbiotic relationship. And then one day it all more or less hangs together and the world is different, although of course not quite aware of the change. Governments promise full employment—and then produce it. (In 1964 unemployment, adjusted to conform more or less to United States' definitions, was 2.9 percent in Italy, 2.5 percent in France and Britain, and 0.4 percent in Germany. Consider the contrast with post-World War I.) Governments undertake to expand their economy at a steady rate—and do so. (In 1961 the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which grew out of the Marshall Plan, undertook to increase their output by 50 percent during the decade of the 1960s. The United States at all events is right on schedule.)
>
> The ability to predict events, as against controlling them, has developed even more impressively—The Council of Economic Advisers' forecast of GNP for 1964 was off by only $400 million in a total of $623 billion; the unemployment forecast was on the nose.

Now came a new proposition, which may have been first set forth in *The Public Interest*. The new economics *required* new government initiatives.

> The more immediate impact of this econometric revolution in the United States is that the Federal government will be endowed, more often than not, with a substantial, and within limits predictable, rise in revenues available for social purposes. Significantly, the war on poverty began in the same year of the great tax cut. The President was not forced to choose between the measures; he was able to proceed with both. In that sense, the war on poverty began not because it was necessary (which it was), but because it was possible.
>
> The singular nature of the new situation in which the Federal government finds itself is that the immediate *supply* of resources available for social purposes might actually outrun the immediate *demand* of established programs. Federal expenditures under existing programs rise at a fairly predictable rate. But, under condi-

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> tions of economic growth, revenues rise faster. This has given birth to the phenomenon of the "fiscal drag"—the idea that unless the Federal government disposes of this annual increment, either by cutting taxes or adding programs, the money taken out of circulation by taxes will slow down economic growth, and could, of course, at a certain point stop it altogether.
>
> Thus, assuming the continued progress of the economy in something like the pattern of recent years, there is likely to be $4-5 billion in additional, unobligated revenue coming in each year. But this increment will only continue to come on condition that it is disposed of. Therefore one of the important tasks to which an administration must address itself is that of devising new and responsible programs for expending public funds in the public interest.
>
> This is precisely the type of decision-making that is suited to the techniques of modern organizations, and which ends up in the hands of persons who make a profession of it. They are less and less political decisions, more and more administrative ones. They are decisions that can be reached by consensus rather than conflict.

The memory is almost lost now, but the Kennedy years were a time of almost feverish efforts to get around the disinclination of Congress to spend money. My first meeting in the Oval Office involved a pay raise for government employees (Even Congress would want to side with the Letter Carriers!); then a double dividend for Veterans Administration life insurance; next a tax cut; then revenue sharing—the chairman of the Council, Walter E. Heller, reasoning that, if Congress would not spend the money, possibly the governors would. This mode took us through the decade with but a single recession at the very end. The Nixon administration continued in just this vein. Revenue sharing was enacted. A guaranteed income was proposed, and almost enacted. George P. Shultz became director of the new Office of Management and Budget. A University of Chicago economist, he set about elaborating a formal definition of a full-employment budget, one in which outlays equal revenues at full employment. Absent full employment, a *deliberate deficit* would stimulate the economy in that direction. On into the seventies when *five* successive tax cuts were enacted.

The success was stunning: so much that it has gone almost unnoticed. The wild gyrations of a capitalist economy gave way to a sequence of more or less uniform business cycles in

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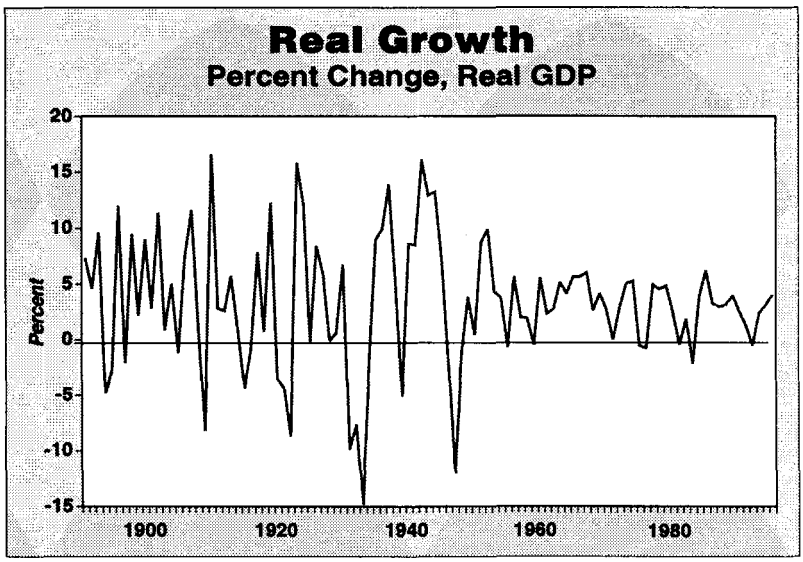

which the economy grew and then did not grow, with only one significant decline. Before 1929 the average business-cycle contraction lasted nearly 21 months following an average expansion of slightly more than 25 months. About even. Over the past 50 years, however, the average recovery has lasted 50 months, with contractions shortened to an average of 11 months. A very different world. In all this past half century, the largest *decline* in output was 2.2 percent, in 1982. Compare that with a drop of 9.9 percent in 1930; followed by 7.7 percent in 1931; followed by 14.8 percent in 1932! As of mid-1995, for example, we are in our tenth postwar expansion, which reached its fiftieth month in May. During the half-century period, the size of our economy has quadrupled, and real income per person has more than doubled.

Reform went forward: but society seemingly regressed. Thus the "deinstitutionalization" of mental patients anticipated in the 1963 legislation was promptly carried out. At the end of 1963, there were 504,604 resident patients in state and county mental hospitals. By 1993 (the latest data available), this had dropped to 76,653. But the 2,000 community mental-health centers never got built. Six hundred or so were set up, but then the program got folded in, moved about, and generally forgot. When, in the mid-1970s, "homeless" people began to

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appear on city streets all across the nation, it aroused no significant enquiry as to what was going on but, rather, a new demand on the part of housing professionals for more "affordable housing."

The health-care imbroglio

A pattern emerges. Great undertakings are proposed in political campaigns, often crafted by professional techniques such as polling and focus groups. If the campaign succeeds, the undertaking is taken as validated. Experts are set to work and the bill emerges. In this regard there has been no equal to the health-care reform project of the Clinton administration during the 103rd Congress. Health insurance had been on the national agenda at least since 1934 when Roosevelt set up the Committee on Economic Security, which drafted the Social Security Act of the following year. It had not been solely a Democratic concern; the Nixon administration, as usual, had proposed a very considerable measure. But it was rejected by a Democratic Congress out of a proprietary sense that this was by rights a Democratic issue. Now, seemingly, its moment had come.

But, whereas New Deal initiatives came, in the main, as responses to popular demand, variously expressed, by 1993, health-care insurance was a latent issue. Five in six Americans had health insurance; most of the poor got it free from the government; it was heavily subsidized for all of the elderly. Hence, it was an issue mostly for those who thought it *should* be an issue: Which is to say, professionals. In 1965, I had cited Everett C. Hughes: "Professionals *profess*. They profess to know better than others the nature of certain matters, and to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs." Further, Hughes wrote, professionals had asserted primacy in formulating public policy in their area of expertise.

And so now it came to health care. The administration organized a task force of some 500 persons, sworn to secrecy, who set about reorganizing and pretty much taking control of one-seventh of the American economy. After the better part of a year, they produced a 1,342-page bill. Martha Derthick commented:

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> In many years of studying American social policy, I have never read an official document that seemed so suffused with coercion and political naiveté as the draft report of the president's health security plan that emerged last fall, with its drastic prescriptions for controlling the conduct of state governments, employers, drug manufacturers, doctors, hospitals, and you and me.

I was by now chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, which had principal jurisdiction over the measure in the Senate, and perforce, I came to know the details of the proposal with a measure of thoroughness. In that process, I became one of possibly a dozen persons outside the task force who knew that the legislation would cut the number of doctors in the United States by one-quarter and the number of specialists by one-half.

Since at least the 1960s, a debate had been going on within the various professions involved concerning these two questions, driven not least by the fact that much of medical education and training is subsidized with public monies. Economists such as Alain Enthoven have addressed such questions as "physician oversupply" and "geographic maldistribution." Writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1994, Richard A. Cooper, M.D., of the Medical College of Wisconsin, observed that "A consensus has developed that better balance in the proportion of primary care physicians and specialists must be achieved" and that this consensus was being quantified: more of the former, fewer of the latter. He noted, however, that primary care is "population based"—indeed, had settled in at about 75 to 85 primary-care physicians per 100,000 population. By contrast, "The driving force behind much of specialty medicine is science, and the specialty workforce is largely technology based." Good subject, not least in this heroic age of medical science, the first such era to occur in the United States as against Europe. The problem was that the Clinton task force did not want to debate the issue; they desired, rather, to decree the outcome and to enact it surreptitiously as a mode of cost control.

The story of the Clinton Task Force may one day be written. As the result of a lawsuit, some documents are now available in the National Archives. As luck would have it, we appear to have retrieved the essential documents in this area.

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On March 31, 1993, "Workgroup 12" addressed the problem in "TOLLGATE 5":

> Problem: An increasingly overabundant number of medical graduates are entering specialty fields instead of primary care fields (family practice, general pediatrics, general internal medicine).

(A word to the wise: pediatrics is not a specialty.) The Workgroup proposed the following solution:

> •Provide [by Federal law] that at least 50% of residency graduates enter primary care practice.
>
> •*Limit Federal funding for first-year residency positions to no more than 110% of the size of the graduating class of U.S. medical schools. This would further support the action to limit specialty residency positions.* (Emphasis in original.)

The Working Group 12 dissent

There followed on April 26, 1993, a quite remarkable dissent signed by some thirteen members of "WORKING GROUP 12" (capitalization never got quite uniform in task-force usage) having been written by a physician at the Veterans Administration.

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>
> SUBJECT: Proposal to cap the total number of graduate physician (resident) entry (PGY-1) training positions in the USA to 110% of the annual number of graduates of US medical schools.
>
> ISSUE: Although this proposal has been presented in Tollgate documents as the position of Group 12, it is not supported by the majority of the members of Group 12 (listed below).
>
> REASONS NOT TO CAP THE TOTAL NUMBER OF US RESIDENCY TRAINING POSITIONS FOR PHYSICIAN GRADUATES
>
> 1. This proposal has been advanced by several Commissions within the last two years as a measure to control the costs of health care. While ostensibly advanced as a manpower policy, its rationale lies in economic policy. Its advocates believe that each physician in America represents a cost center. He not only receives a high personal salary, but is able to generate health care costs by ordering tests, admitting patients to hospitals and performing technical procedures. This thesis may be summarized as: TO CONTROL COSTS, CONTROL THE NUMBER OF PHYSICIANS.

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2. Capitalist economic theory does not support this argument. Manpower theory does not support this argument.

3. Economic theory would argue that to reduce costs one should increase the number of physicians. If each physician is a cost center then one should reduce incentives to increase procedures, admissions and tests, or control the costs of these items, rather than limit the number of physicians. Those desiring to limit physician numbers point out that while the number of graduates was doubled beginning in 1975 from 7500 to 15,000 per year, costs of care rose markedly. The physician increase was deliberate social policy to address shortages of physicians and access problems, which were partially but not wholly solved by this increase. The growth of health care costs in the same 15 year span can certainly be attributed more accurately to distorted reimbursement incentives for physicians and the entire health care sector and to runaway inflation in technical costs.

4. Capitalist manpower theory would argue that controlling demand by limiting supply is perverse. Managed competition seeks to control demand and uses physicians as the agents to manage access to services. By reversing the incentives, the same provider becomes the controller rather than the generator of costs.

5. On the demand side of the supply/demand equation there is little support for limiting the number of health care providers. Under the Clinton Health Plan the demand for primary care and generalist physicians vastly outstrips supply. Insuring universal access will add 35 million people to the health care network and no modeling has been done of the manpower requirement to assure access to care for this influx. Even under present access to care we do not have enough minority physicians, primary care physicians or physicians willing to work in remote rural and embattled inner city areas.

6. While there is agreement that the US needs a better balance in its physician production between generalists and specialists, there is not even strong evidence that there are too many specialists in practice for the actual needs of the population under current access to health care, let alone what might be needed under universal access. Manpower modeling under universal access was not undertaken by Group 12. While the last major physician manpower study, the GEMNAC [Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee] Report (1974) projected physician excess in some specialties by 1990 under unchanged access, a recent examination of only 6 specialties by COGME [Council on Graduate Medical Education] (1900) [sic] found shortages for

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generalist physicians, psychiatrists, child psychiatrists, and surgeons. The AAMC [Association of American Medical Colleges] study (1989) concluded that current rates of production of physicians would not lead to a surplus. All manpower studies done to date have a heavy emphasis on studying the pipeline for supply of MD/DO [Medical Doctor/Doctor of Osteopathy], and are very poor tools for determining demand, even under present conditions. No modeling of universal access has been done. It is of interest that pediatrics societies contested the finding of COGME that there would not be a shortage of pediatricians, arguing for a model examining the need for pediatricians to care for the uninsured.

7. Some who argue for capping physician supply invoke the ratio of physicians to total population in other industrialized countries. At the present time the US ratio of MD/DO to population is exactly at the median for industrialized nations.... On the face of it this does not seem a strong argument for limiting physicians. This raw ratio also does not address the US problems of physician mix or patient access.

8. Attempts within the profession to limit physician number are severely limited by the FTC [Federal Trade Commission]. The FTC has brought suit against the ACGME [Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education] and physician specialties who believe they have too many members. Despite the FTC, these specialties have reduced the number of physicians in certain disciplines by strict quality control of resident training programs. More could be done in this area by private sector mechanisms if the ACGME were granted some relaxation of FTC restrictions.

9. The proposal under consideration, to cap the number of entry resident training positions to 110% of US graduates, is not even a true manpower control policy. The number of graduates of US medical schools is not limited by this policy. In effect, the policy would merely limit the entry of foreign medical graduates into US practice, since they must take US residency training to achieve licensure. At worst, enactment of this proposal could lead to US medical graduates, whose average debt upon graduation is $57,000, unable to entry [sic] residency training because of displacement by foreign physicians in competition for a limited number of slots.

10. The most insidious part of the proposal to cap entry slots to graduate medical education is that it carries in its wake the necessity to create a vast regulatory apparatus to implement it. The total number of GME [Graduate Medical Education] slots is not under central control, nor are they federally funded. Medicare

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pays an estimated 22% of the salaries for resident physicians as part of its fair share because they provide care for Medicare patients.

11. If it were to prove necessary in the future to control physician supply, the control point would be the number of entry positions to medical schools in this country. In 1990 the AAMC manpower study concluded that the number of entry positions should not be increased but did not need to be decreased. Through private sector accreditation of medical schools LCME [Liaison Committee on Medical Education] the annual number of allopathic physician graduates has not increased in the last decade. While the number of osteopathic graduates is increasing because of a doubling of the number of schools of osteopathy since 1975, these graduates tend to go into primary care and practice in non-urban settings.

12. The physician manpower problems to be solved in this country are ones of specialty mix, current shortages of generalists and certain specialists, and potential greater shortages once universal coverage is achieved, geographic distribution of physicians to rural and inner city sites and achieving greater racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the physician workforce. NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS IS SOLVED, AND SOME ARE EXACERBATED, BY LIMITING ACCESS TO GRADUATE TRAINING FOR PHYSICIANS OR ATTEMPTING THROUGH OTHER MEANS TO LIMIT THE TOTAL SUPPLY OF PHYSICIANS IN THE US.

13. To end on a philosophic note, when the proposal to cap training slots was presented to the presidents of the major US universities last weekend, they were incredulous that the US government would advance as sound social policy a proposal to limit access to one of the three learned professions with its millennial history of achieving social good. They further recognized that in America open access to careers in these professions has been a traditional path for immigrant social mobility.

4-26-93

A sin of omission

The administration bill, when it came, included a "Subtitle A—Workforce Priorities Under Federal Payment," which provided for a National Council on Graduate Medical Education in the Department of Health and Human Services that would ensure that, by 1998-1999, "not less than 55 percent" of medical-school residents complete a program in primary care. The

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explicit 110 percent residency cap was replaced by a cap to be determined by the Council. In the Congress, the House Education and Labor Committee bill was specific, setting the 110 percent ratio, others left it to the Council, but clearly this was to be its goal. The one exception was the bill reported by the Senate Committee on Finance which would have nothing to do with either.[2]

These are, were, legitimate issues of debate. The problem, and I take this to be the fatal failing of the process, is that neither was debated. The dissenters on WORKING GROUP 12, for all the quirkiness—just what is "capitalist manpower theory"?—made legitimate points, but they were never made public. The Clinton administration devoted most of its energies for a year and more to health-care reform without *once* touching on this crucial detail—not even in the semi-privacy of the Cabinet Room. ("Incidentally, you might want to know....") The central document of the campaign was *Health Security, The President's Report to the American People*, an ambitious, all-purpose, glossy affair issued in October 1993. Of 136 pages, there is one section, "Doctors in the United States: An Unhealthy Mix," 11 lines in all, devoted to primary-physician supply:

> Health care reform will increase the demand for primary care physicians, nurses and other health professions, correcting the long-standing incentives that discouraged medical students from becoming family doctors. But change won't happen quickly. To encourage American teaching hospitals to switch some residency positions from specialist to primary care, the federal government must make it more worthwhile to train them.
>
> Consequently, rather than pay for graduate medical education

[2] The five Congressional committees with jurisdiction over health-care reform reported legislation with the following provisions limiting the total number of medical-school graduates permitted to enter resident training: House Ways and Means Committee—a cap determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services; House Education and Labor Committee—residency slots limited to 110 percent of U.S. medical graduates; House Energy and Commerce Committee did not report legislation; Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee—a cap determined by a council; and Senate Finance Committee—no provision. The leadership bill debated on the floor of the Senate initially included a provision to cap the number of residency positions at 110 percent of U.S. medical graduates (unless modified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services). Senator Mitchell later modified his bill so that the cap was determined by a council.

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> without regard to specialty, public and private investment will redistribute the balance between residency slots devoted to primary care and those devoted to specialty training.

There is no mention whatever of limiting the number of hospital residencies to 110 percent of U.S. medical-school graduates. In retrospect, it is not hard to understand the administration's reluctance to be open about all this. Begin with the fact that this was an administration of fervid and professed liberals; the children of the 1960s at long last in power. To be liberal means to wish the Third World well; surely not to slam the golden door on the swarthy sons and daughters of India, Pakistan, and the Filipinos—like some nasty, hateful, racist Chinese Exclusion Act. (Recall the point made by the WORKING GROUP 12 dissidents: The 110 percent ratio would not reduce the number of residents if U.S. schools increased *their* enrollment.)

Then there was the problem of the poor. The municipal hospitals of a city such as New York depend heavily on the services of interns who have come from elsewhere. Some are Americans who went abroad for medical school. Some are young doctors who have come to Boston or Dallas or wherever for the best internships in the world, fully intending to return home. (Much as Americans once interned in Paris.) But most are, in fact, immigrants, and fine doctors we are fortunate to have. Take them out of New York City, hospitals and health care in New York collapse. The world's leading liberals could hardly be seen to propose that either. As for specialists, all right-thinking folk know them to be Park Avenue elitists; but then, they do help when complications set in. Best be discrete. And then there was the dirty little secret. The health-care reformers soon discovered that they had no money. And so to provide universal health insurance, they had to provide less health care—by cutting the number of doctors. Now, not all would agree with that characterization; but something very like that did happen.

The *professions* said nothing. The final paragraph in the WORKING GROUP 12 dissent refers to a conference on health-care reform sponsored by the Association of American Universities in Washington, April 17-18, 1993. Pretty much everyone

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was there. The *Executive Summary* gets the facts straight.

> The implications of health care reform for academic health centers fall into three broad categories: teaching, research and patient care. Following are the general trends presented at the conference:
>
> Education
> •Inevitable limits on number of sub-specialty training programs and positions in US. Reduction of the overall number of positions to 105-110 percent of US medical school graduates.

But if any of the university officials present was "incredulous" at the suggestion, they remained silent. An exception was Walter Reich, M.D., Senior Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. He was in touch with the Finance Committee regularly on the subject of "a deliberate dumbing down of medicine." A letter of August 29, 1994, had this:

> There's also something profoundly anti-intellectual, even medieval, about the effort to abolish medical specialization. Knowledge, in the case of modern medicine, can result in large expenses. Get rid of that knowledge, some argue, and you can get rid of those expenses. In fact, this approach is so illogical and strange that characterizing it as medieval does a profound disservice to what was, in comparison to this age of anti-medical-scientism, an intellectually luminous epoch. Attempting to dismantle the edifice of specialization seems akin, somehow, to the deliberate torching of the great library in Alexandria. This is enlightened social policy?

When all else fails, the press is supposed to step in. It did not. A search of the Nexis database located only *three* articles—out of thousands on the general subject—that focused on this issue: the *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1993, "U.S. Incentives for More Family Doctors Weighed" by Marlene Cimons; the *New York Times*, September 15, 1993, "Clinton Seeks to Regulate Medical Specialties" by Robert Pear; the *New York Times*, January 24, 1994, "New York Hospitals Fear Harm in Plan to Reduce Specialization" by Todd S. Purdum.

Toward the end of the 103rd Congress there were occasional articles citing protests by me and Senator Alfonse D'Amato that the administration bill would devastate the New York City hospital system, which for most of this century has,

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in fact, provided universal health care. But these were pretty much of the "Congressman Opposes Base Closing" genre. The best explanation is that there was no national debate, and accordingly, the press did not report one. Here, for example, is the 1993-1994 Nexis tabulation for the *Times*, East Coast and West Coast:

	New York Times	*Los Angeles Times*
Articles with "health reform" or "health-care reform" in headline or lead paragraph.	324	819
Articles with "health reform" or "health-care reform" anywhere in body.	1,286	1,979
Articles with Clinton workforce proposal as primary subject matter.	2	1

The price paid

In the end, nothing came of the whole effort. In May, 1995, at a conference entitled "Beyond Gridlock," sponsored jointly by the Brookings Institution and the Committee on the Constitutional System, Robin Toner of the *New York Times* looked back with candor and a measure of puzzlement. The "Great Health Care Drive of 1993" had become the "Legislative Train Wreck of 1994." She got it quite right. The Democratic legislature couldn't cope. The whole thing was too much. "The fact remains that the bill bogged down—in a Democratic House and in Democratic Committees—while a Democratic White House watched in dismay." (Neither body of Congress even voted on a health-care bill. A whip count in the House showed that the *Democratic* votes weren't there. The Senate was in much the same situation.) She was further correct that something so large and potentially controversial could only be dealt with in a bipartisan setting. It was decided *not* to attempt this at a Cabinet Room meeting of February 7, 1994, and, from that day forward, the legislation was doomed. That

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being the date the discussion *began* in the Finance Committee!

But there was more. Michael Polanyi would say: "People change their minds." On large matters. Suddenly. Without notice. I would suggest that some such thing happened to the professionalization of reform. Even in 1965 one could note a popular unease. Thirty years ago, I noted that after *all* we had done for Appalachia, "in 1964 ... Harlan County, Kentucky, returned a freshman Republican Congressman." Professionalization would continue, "But a certain price will be paid, and a considerable risk will be incurred." The "price will be a decline in the moral exhilaration of public affairs at the domestic level." The risk "a combination of enlightenment, resources, and skill which in the long run, to use Harold D. Laswell's phrase, becomes a 'monocracy of power.'" What I missed was the resentment that would grow.

A new breed of Republican did not miss it. For much of the postwar era, Republicans competed with Democrats to fulfill pretty much the same domestic agenda. I served in two Republican cabinets, and I know this, even if most Democrats don't, or don't want to. But then this changed. Republicans became a party of ideas in their own right. I wrote about it in an article for the *New York Times* in 1980.

> Not by chance, but by dint of sustained and often complex argument there is a movement to turn Republicans into Populists, a party of the People arrayed against a Democratic Party of the State....
>
> The Republicans' dominant idea, at least for the moment, seems to be that the social controls of modern government have become tyrannical or, at the very least, exorbitantly expensive. This oppression—so the strategic analysis goes—is made possible by taxation, such that cutting taxes becomes an objective in its own right, business cycles notwithstanding.

The great strategic goal of the new thinking was to undo the opportunities for greater government created by the Democratic "Economic Revolution." A counterrevolution now succeeded in "starving the beast." The deficit came to be the central fact of central government. Whatever professionals might think best, it could not be paid for. This had led to the fatal complexity and coerciveness of health-care reform, which, in

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turn, brought on what George Will has called "the cymbal-crash elections of 1994." There followed a surge of programmatic initiatives unknown since the New Deal. Designed to undo the New Deal.

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Capitalism and morality

JAMES Q. WILSON

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, the two founding editors of this magazine published important essays on the cultural and moral status of capitalism.* Irving Kristol worried that the most intelligent contemporary defenders of capitalism were now mostly libertarians who praised the market because it produced material benefits and enhanced human freedom but who denied that markets had anything to do with morality. Friedrich Hayek, for example, had written that "in a free society it is neither desirable nor practicable that material rewards should be made generally to correspond to what men recognize as merit." It is not practicable because no one can supply a non-arbitrary definition of merit (or justice); it is not desirable because any attempt to impose such a definition would create a despotism. Kristol worried that people would not support any economic order in which "the will to success and privilege was severed from its moral moorings."

* *The Public Interest*, Number 21, Fall 1970.

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Capitalism could not survive if, quoting George Fitzhugh, "none but the selfish virtues are in repute" because in such a society "virtue loses all her loveliness" and social order becomes impossible.

In the same issue, Daniel Bell published his famous essay on "The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism" in which he suggested that the bourgeois culture—rational, pragmatic, and moral—that had created capitalism was now being destroyed by the success of capitalism. As capitalism replaced feudal stagnation with material success, it replaced tradition with materialism; as privation was supplanted by abundance, prudence was displaced by prodigality. Capitalism created both a parvenu class of rich plutocrats and corporate climbers and a counterculture of critical intellectuals and disaffected youth. The latter began to have a field day exposing what they took to be the greed, hypocrisy, and Philistinism of the former.

Capitalism's great test

Both Kristol and Bell were amplifying on a theme first developed by Joseph Schumpeter: Contrary to what Marx had taught, capitalism would be destroyed not by its failures but by its successes. Their views did not go unchallenged; a decade later George Gilder, in *Wealth and Poverty*, launched a frontal attack on the Schumpeterian theory (and its development by Kristol and Bell) by arguing that capitalism was, in fact, a highly moral enterprise because it "begins with giving" and requires "faith."

However one judges that debate, it is striking that in 1970—at a time when socialism still had many defenders, when certain American economists (and the CIA!) were suggesting that the Soviet economy was growing faster than the American, when books were being written explaining how Fidel Castro could achieve by the use of "moral incentives" what other nations achieved by employing material ones—Kristol and Bell saw that the great test of capitalism would not be economic but moral. Time has proved them right. Except for a handful of American professors, everyone here and abroad now recognizes that capitalism produces greater material abundance for more people than any other economic system ever invented. The evidence is not in dispute. A series of natural experi-

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ments were conducted on a scale that every social scientist must envy: Several nations—China, Germany, Korea, and Vietnam—were sawed in two, and capitalism was installed in one part and "socialism" in the other. In every case, the capitalist part out-produced, by a vast margin, the non-capitalist one.

Moreover, it has become clear during the last half century that democratic regimes only flourish in capitalist societies. Not every nation with something approximating capitalism is democratic, but every nation that is democratic is, to some significant degree, capitalist. (By "capitalist," I mean that production is chiefly organized on the basis of privately owned enterprises, and exchange takes place primarily through voluntary markets.)

If capitalism is an economic success and the necessary (but not sufficient) precondition for democracy, it only remains vulnerable on cultural and moral grounds. That is, of course, why today's radical intellectuals have embraced the more extreme forms of multiculturalism and postmodernism. These doctrines are an attack on the hegemony of bourgeois society and the legitimacy of bourgeois values. The attack takes various forms—denying the existence of any foundation for morality, asserting the incommensurability of cultural forms, rejecting the possibility of textual meaning, or elevating the claims of non-Western (or non-white or non-Anglo) traditions. By whatever route it travels, contemporary radicalism ends with a rejection of the moral claims of capitalism: Because morality is meaningless, because capitalism is mere power, or because markets and corporations destroy culture, capitalism is arbitrary, oppressive, or corrupting.

Most critics of capitalism, of course, are not radicals. Liberal critics recognize, as postmodernists pretend not to, that, if you are going to offer a moral criticism of capitalism, you had better believe that moral judgments are possible and can be made persuasive. To liberals, the failure of capitalism lies in its production of unjustifiable inequalities of wealth and its reckless destruction of the natural environment. Capitalism may produce material abundance, the argument goes, but at too high a price in human suffering and social injustice.

I do not deny that capitalism has costs; every human activity has them. (It was a defender of capitalism, after all, who

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reminded us that there is no such thing as a free lunch.) For people worried about inequality or environmental degradation, the question is not whether capitalism has consequences but whether its consequences are better or worse than those of some *feasible* economic alternative. (I stress "feasible" because I tire of hearing critics compare capitalist reality to socialist—or communitarian or cooperative—ideals. When ideals are converted into reality, they tend not to look so ideal.) And, in evaluating consequences, one must reckon up not simply the costs but the costs set against the benefits. In addition, one must count as benefits the tendency of an economic system to produce beliefs and actions that support a prudent concern for mitigating the unreasonable costs of the system.

Capitalism and public policy

By these tests, practical alternatives to capitalism do not seem very appealing. Inequality is a feature of every modern society; Adam Smith expected that it would be a particular feature of what we call capitalism. Indeed, he began *The Wealth of Nations* by setting forth a puzzle that he hoped to solve. It was this: in "the savage nations of hunters and fishers" (what we later learned to call euphemistically "native cultures" or "less-developed nations"), everyone works and almost everyone acquires the essentials of human sustenance, but they tend to be "so miserably poor" that they are reduced, on occasion, to killing babies and abandoning the elderly and the infirm. Among prosperous nations, by contrast, many people do not work at all and many more live lives of great luxury, yet the general level of prosperity is so high that even the poorest people are better off than the richest person in a primitive society. His book was an effort to explain why "the system of natural liberty" would produce both prosperity and inequality and to defend as tolerable the inequality that was the inevitable (and perhaps necessary) corollary of prosperity.

Smith certainly succeeded in the first task but was less successful in the second, at least to judge by the number of people who believe that inequality can be eliminated without sacrificing prosperity. Many nations have claimed to eliminate market-based inequalities, but they have done so only by creating non-market inequalities—a Soviet *nomenklatura*, a ruling

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military elite, an elaborate black market, or a set of non-cash perks. Between unconstrained market inequality and the lesser inequality achieved by some redistribution, there is much to discuss and decide, and so the welfare-state debate proceeds. Participants in this debate sometimes forget that the only societies in which such a debate can have much meaning are those that have produced wealth that can be redistributed and that have acquired a government that will do so democratically—in short, capitalist societies.

Similarly with respect to the environment: Only rich (that is, capitalist) nations can afford to worry much about the environment, and only democratic (that is, capitalist) nations have governments that will listen to environmentalists. As with inequality, environmental policies in capitalist systems will vary greatly—from the inconsequential through the prudent to the loony—but they will scarcely exist in non-capitalist ones. If anyone doubted this, they were surely convinced when the Iron Curtain was torn down in 1989, giving the West its first real look at what had been hidden behind the Berlin Wall. Eastern Europe had been turned into a vast toxic waste dump. Václav Havel explained why: A government that commands the economy will inevitably command the polity; given a commanding position, a government will distort or destroy the former and corrupt or oppress the latter.

To compel people engaged in production and exchange to internalize all of the costs of production and exchange without destroying production and exchange, one must be able to make proposals to people who do not want to hear such proposals, induce action among people who do not want to act, and monitor performance by people who do not like monitors, and do all of this only to the extent that the gains in human welfare are purchased at acceptable costs. No regime will make this result certain, but only democratic capitalist regimes make it at all possible.

Capitalism creates what are often called "post-material values" that lead some private parties to make environment-protecting proposals. Capitalism, because it requires private property, sustains a distinction between the public and the private sphere and thereby provides a protected place for people to stand who wish to make controversial proposals. And capital-

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ism permits (but does not require) the emergence of democratic institutions that can (but may not) respond to such proposals. Or to put it simply: environmental action arises out of the demands of journalists, professors, foundation executives, and private-sector activists who, for the most part, would not exist in a non-capitalist regime.

Capitalism and the good life

Many readers may accept the view that capitalism permits, or possibly even facilitates, the making of desirable public policies but reject the idea that this is because there is anything moral about it. At best, it is amoral, a tool for the achievement of human wants that is neither good nor bad. At worst, it is an immoral system that glorifies greed but, by happy accident, occasionally makes possible popular government and pays the bills of some public-interest lobbies that can get on with the business of doing good. Hardly anyone regards it as moral.

People with these views can find much support in *The Wealth of Nations*. They will recall the famous passage in which Smith points out that it is from the "interest," not the "benevolence," of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner. An "invisible hand" leads him to promote the public good, though this is "no part of his intention." Should they study the book more carefully, they will come across passages predicting the degradation of the human spirit that is likely to occur from the division of labor, the incessant seeking after monopoly benefits and political privilege that will follow from the expansion of manufacturing, and the "low profligacy and vice" that will attend upon the growth of large cities. The average worker employed in repetitive tasks will become "stupid and ignorant," the successful merchant living in a big city will become personally licentious and politically advantaged.

Karl Marx, a close student of Smith's writings, had these passages in mind (and, indeed, referred to them) when he drew his picture of the alienation man would suffer as a consequence of private property and capitalism. But Marx (and, in some careless passages, even Smith) had made an error. They had confused the consequences of modernization (that

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is, of industrialization and urbanization) with the consequences of capitalism. The division of labor can be furthered and large industrial enterprises created by statist regimes as well as by free ones; people will flock to cities to seek opportunities conferred by socialist as well as capitalist economies; a profligate and self-serving elite will spring up to seize the benefits supplied by aristocratic or socialist or authoritarian or free-market systems. Show people the road to wealth, status, or power, and they will rush down that road; many will do some rather unattractive things along the way.

Among the feasible systems of political economy, capitalism offers the best possibility for checking some, but not all, of these tendencies toward degradation and depravity. When Smith suggested that the increased division of labor would turn most workers into unhappy copies of Charlie Chaplin in *Modern Times*, he thought that only public education could provide a remedy. Because he wrote long before the advent of modern technology, he can be forgiven for not having foreseen the tendency of free markets to substitute capital for labor in ways that relieve many workers of precisely those mindlessly repetitive tasks that Smith supposed would destroy the human spirit.

Urbanization is the result of modernity—that is, of the weakening of village ties, the advent of large-scale enterprise, the rise of mass markets, and an improvement in transportation—and modernity may have non-capitalist as well as capitalist sources. Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Moscow have long been among the dozen largest cities in the world, but, until quite recently (and still quite uncertainly), none of these was located in a nation that could be fairly described as capitalist. They were state-dominated economies, either socialist or mercantilist, and Smith would have had no use for any of them. And, being non-capitalist, most of these states were barely democratic (the USSR not at all). Lacking either a truly private sector or a truly democratic regime, reformist and meliorist tendencies designed to counteract the adverse consequences of massive urbanization were not much in evidence. Americans who rightly think that high rates of crime are characteristic of big cities, but wrongly suppose that this is especially true of capitalist cities, need to spend some

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time in Moscow, Rio, and Mexico City.

Capitalism creates privilege; socialism creates privilege; mercantilism creates privilege; primitivism creates privilege. Men and women everywhere will seek advantage, grasp power, and create hierarchies. But to the extent that a society is capitalist, it is more likely than its alternatives to sustain challenges to privilege. These arise from economic rivals, privately financed voluntary associations, and democratically elected power-holders; they operate through market competition, government regulation, legal action, and moral suasion. But they operate clumsily and imperfectly, and, in the routine aspects of ordinary morality, they may not operate well enough.

Capitalism and the morality of everyday life

By this point, I may have persuaded a few readers that a system of rival interests has some beneficial moral effects, at least in comparison to statist economies in which the playing field is tilted by one set of greedy actors having decisive power over another. But nothing I have said is inconsistent with the view that capitalism rests on greed and therefore with the view that, at best, capitalism is amoral.

This was not, I think, the view of either Smith or many of the other earlier defenders of capitalism. In *The Wealth of Nations*, he certainly gives an unflinchingly honest account of how self-interest drives economic decisions. But, as Albert Hirschman has suggested, eighteenth-century thinkers did not divide human motives into reason and interests, they divided them into reason, *passions*, and interests. Having seen the failures of unaided reason and the perils of unguided passions, they hoped that calm interests would inform reason and temper passion.

This was the argument about the beneficial effects of *doux commerce*—sweet (or gentle) commerce—and it was implicitly taken up by the American Founders when they made their case for a commercial republic. It has been repeated of late by the British anthropologist and philosopher Ernest Gellner who, in reflecting on the failure of European communism, observes that no society can avoid finding a way to channel the desire men have to advance themselves. In traditional and in statist societies, the way to attain wealth is first to attain

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power, usually by force. But, in market societies, "production becomes a better path to wealth than domination."

Critics of capitalism argue that wealth confers power, and indeed it does, up to a point. But this is not a decisive criticism unless one supposes, fancifully, that there is some way to arrange human affairs so that the desire for wealth vanishes. The real choice is between becoming wealthy by first acquiring political or military power or by getting money directly without bothering with conquest or domination. Max Weber put it this way: All economic systems rest on greed, but capitalism, because it depends on profit, is the one that disciplines greed.

In the process of imposing that discipline, capitalism contributes to self-discipline. It encourages civility, trust, self-command, and cosmopolitanism by first making these traits useful and then making them habitual.

Smith alluded to this when he observed that "commerce and manufactures gradually introduced order and good government, and with them, the liberty and security of individuals ... who had before lived almost in a continual state of war with their neighbours and of servile dependency upon their superiors." Lest Smith be interpreted as arguing in favor of central government, he makes clear in other places that the beneficial effects of free and orderly commerce operate chiefly on the character of individuals, especially would-be lords and conquerors now converted into merchants. Nor is he, in the passage quoted above, contradicting his account of the baleful effects on ordinary people of an extreme division of labor; capitalism may bring liberty and security, but it also brings temerity, narrowness, and profligacy. To Smith, sweet commerce was sweet-and-sour.

Smith's ambivalence reflected his analysis of the class structure of society. Commerce would create a middle class whose new members would mostly be decent people. "In the middling and inferior stations of life," he wrote, "the road to virtue and that to fortune ... are, happily, very nearly the same." Among people engaged in middle-class occupations, "real and solid professional abilities, joined to prudent, just, firm, and temperate conduct, can very seldom fail of success." In this circumstance, the proverb that "honesty is the best

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policy" proves true. But matters are very different in "the superior stations of life," in part, because the rich and well-born live in a self-constructed world of privilege that isolates them from the effective judgment of ordinary (and ordinarily decent) men, and, in part, because merchants and manufacturers will move to cities where they will have countless opportunities to acquire political privileges—monopolies, loopholes, and subsidies—that insulate them from fair market judgments about their products, services, and practices.

Smith's worries, so often quoted, about the affluent few detract, I think, from the much more important impact of capitalism on the not-so-affluent many. An economic system that provides many alternative suppliers for any desired product or service creates an incentive for each supplier to act as if he or she cared about the interests of the customer. Everyone has heard enough stories about surly waiters in Soviet restaurants to acknowledge that communist managers never took customers as seriously as they took commissars, but perhaps this was simply the extreme result of doing business in a pathological society. I doubt that. There has been comparable evidence available in the United States for many years. Until recently, most big airports supplied food to travelers by giving an exclusive franchise to a single vendor. Of late, many airports are giving franchises to several rival vendors—McDonald's, Burger King, Taco Bell, and the like—to offer food competitively in airports. Without question, the quality of food and service has gone up.

A skeptic will rejoin that competition merely requires suppliers to act as if they cared about the customer. But, as any economist will note, a firm's reputation has a capital value (it is sometimes measured on the balance sheet as good will) and so business executives who wish to maximize that value will devote a great deal of effort to inculcating a service ethic in their employees. One cannot do that cynically. "If you can fake sincerity, you've got it made," someone once said. That may be true for a few individuals, but organizing such fakery on a large scale is impossible—the teaching will be unconvincing, and the lesson will be ignored.

But acting as if one cared has more than economic significance. Our characters are formed, as Aristotle observed, by

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the process of habituation. Any process that makes a personal disposition habitual is character forming. Parents know this, which is why they teach good manners to their children by means of constant small reminders and an insistence on routine observances. Though I am aware of no evidence bearing on it, there is little reason to suppose that habituation ends with adulthood or cannot occur outside the family. Are young people who have worked for three years at McDonald's and been taught to parrot learned phrases ("How may I serve you?" "Will that be all?" "Thank you.") more likely on leaving for better jobs to be civil than are similar youngsters who worked in a company that attached no value to civility? I don't know, but I think so.

When Smith wrote that the "understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments," he was worrying about the harmful effect on the mind of dull and exhausting labor. But the shortened work day and the use of machinery have made this effect much less likely than it was in the eighteenth century. Today, it may be that it is the manners of people that are formed in part by their daily employment.

Capitalist virtues

Capitalism requires some measure of trust. In any economic system, buying and selling occurs, but voluntary buying and selling on a large scale among strangers requires confidence in fair dealing that cannot depend on one party having much detailed knowledge about the other. Routinized exchanges present some of the same problems as a "Prisoner's Dilemma" in which both participants have an incentive to cheat if they assume they will only play the game—or engage in the exchange—once. The solution to the dilemma lies in repeating the game in conformity with this rule: do to the other party what he has just done to you ("tit for tat," in political scientist Robert Axelrod's phrase), but make your first move a "nice" one in order to encourage the other party to do the same. In some societies, mainly Western ones, this rule is enforced by contract law; in others, notably Eastern ones, by group affiliations. Capitalism takes advantage of this rule in order to create large, permanent markets among strangers that can oper-

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ate without incessant recourse to retribution. In so doing, it strengthens conformity to the premise on which it depends: some minimum level of trust. This is a moralizing activity even though every customer knows that another rule—*caveat emptor*—also operates.

In a recent paper, John Mueller of the University of Rochester has observed that price haggling—once a common feature of most markets and still characteristic of some—has been abandoned even though it conferred short-term advantages on the seller. (This was true because sellers, knowing more about their wares than customers, had an advantage over most casual shoppers.) But some sellers discovered that, in the long run, they did more business by setting attractive, fixed prices. This practice lowered transaction costs for customers, thereby enlarging the number of customers.[1] Mueller notes that, as early as 1727, businessman-turned-novelist Daniel Defoe argued against haggling because it encouraged both parties to lie. The rise of fixed-price dealing has shifted misrepresentation from price to quality (or at least to advertising about quality).

Another premise on which capitalism depends is self-command. Smith understood that investment was required for capital to be accumulated and that investment, in turn, required that some people be willing to postpone immediate gratification for later (and larger) benefits. Smith did not explain why we should assume that the number of savers will be sufficient to produce the necessary investment. He observed that "prodigality," the result of a "passion for present enjoyment," will diminish the capital available for economic growth, and so it will be necessary for the "frugal man" to save enough to spare the rest of us from the consequences of our own prodigality. But will this occur? Smith predicts that "the profusion or imprudence of some" will be "always more than compensated for by the frugality and good conduct of others." Why? Well,

[1] Why, then, does price haggling still occur in the sale of automobiles? In part, it is because the purchaser, as well as the dealer, has something to sell. The purchaser usually has a used car to trade in and has little incentive to set a fixed price for it. He bargains over what the trade-in is worth and so the dealer must bargain over what the new car is worth. Even here, however, some dealers are experimenting with fixed-price sales.

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the desire to save comes from an innate desire to better our condition. But, since only a few save a lot, the desire must be limited to a few. Will they be too few?

People differ in their degree of self-command but are alike in the high regard in which they hold people who display self-command (provided the display is not excessive, as it is with personalities that are miserly or rigid). Self-command is, in short, regarded (up to a point) as a virtue, one that is essential to capitalism and that capitalism strengthens to the extent that it induces more and more people to think about the future. (Indeed, economic growth requires that people have a concept of a secular future, a notion that may well have been absent or meaningless in feudal Europe.) The recent decline in the rate of American private savings corresponds to a period in which self-indulgence has been conspicuous. I have no idea what to make of this parallel except to suggest that a complete understanding will almost surely require a cultural, as well as economic, analysis. If all that mattered were net yields on savings, the Japanese would not be saving anything. Their banks pay very low interest rates, yet their customers save at world-record rates.

Finally, capitalism contributes to cosmopolitanism. This remark will be laughable to any reader who, when hearing the word "capitalist," conjures up an image of George Babbitt or Henry Ford. Capitalism, having been linked by artists to bourgeois culture, has forever been linked to narrow Philistinism. But, long ago, Gary Becker explained why markets are the enemy of racial or ethnic discrimination. Prejudice is costly: It cuts a supplier off from potential customers and an employer off from potential workers, thus reducing sales and raising factor costs.

Embedded in a thoroughly racist community, capitalism can easily exist side by side with prejudice because there are no competitive disadvantages to acting on the basis of prejudice: Since white workers and customers will not mingle with black workers and customers, all employers are on the same footing. But let a crack develop in the unanimity of racist sentiment; let some workers and some customers become indifferent to the racial identity of their colleagues; let nationwide enterprises discover that some customers dislike racism and will

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make their purchasing decisions on that basis; let this happen, and market pressures will swiftly penalize employers who think that they can, without cost, cater to prejudice.

None of this is to deny the important role played by law, court order, and the example of desegregated government agencies. But imagine rapid desegregation occurring if only law, order, and example were operating. It would be slow, uneven, and painful. Public schools desegregated more slowly than hotels and restaurants not only because white parents cared more about who their children went to school with than about who was in the next hotel room or at the next cafe table but also because school authorities lacked any market incentive to admit more or different pupils. Indeed, a statist economy would not only resist desegregation, it would allocate economic benefits—franchises, licenses, credit—precisely on the basis of political, class, ethnic, or racial status.

Capitalism against slavery

In a remarkable essay, historian Thomas L. Haskell of Rice University has connected capitalism to the attack on slavery in a bold and new way. The conventional view among historians of the social-control school has been that reform efforts, including the attack on slavery, were intended to further the hegemonic interests of the bourgeoisie. When abolishing slavery was the most rational way to insure the docility of the workers and enhance the legitimacy of the bourgeoisie, slavery was abolished.

This argument is not crudely Marxist; sophisticated control theorists do not necessarily say that businessmen stood to benefit immediately and materially from an end to slavery. They are even prepared to concede that the business classes deceived themselves about what they were doing. But, what they insist upon is that the bourgeoisie could not really have acted out of altruistic motives. And it does seem strange to think that they might have done so. After all, British capitalists were practicing profitable large-scale agriculture in the West Indies. They had many allies, including customers, in London. Then, all of a sudden, slavery was ended after a public debate that rested almost entirely, as far as I can tell, on humanitarian principles. Control theorists suggest that it came about

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because the capitalists wanted to enhance their legitimacy by abolishing slave labor so that labor for slave wages would not be suspect. As David Brion Davis put it, the abolitionist movement "helped clear an ideological path for British industrialists" that, by exaggerating the harshness of slavery, "gave sanction to less barbarous modes of social discipline."

Haskell finds this a somewhat tortured argument. Can capitalist opponents of slavery, notably the successful Quaker businessmen of the late eighteenth century, really have thought that their "ideological hegemony" (whatever they thought that might be) would be enhanced by attacking the slave system, and that this was more important to them than what they repeatedly and eloquently *said* was their motive—namely, the horror they felt toward involuntary servitude?

In place of the social-control theory, Haskell suggests that capitalism supported, and was wholly consistent with, the religious convictions of the Quaker abolitionists. As capitalism spread, it carried with it a universalistic message. An important part was the new, high value attached to keeping promises and the concordant development and enforcement of contract law. As commerce spread, promise keeping and contract writing were increasingly carried on with strangers and foreigners, including Jews, heathens, and Levantines. Capitalism sharpened one's sense of, and commitment to, the future, and it equipped its more skillful practitioners with experience in dealing with contingencies. Successful capitalists learned to deal fairly with distant strangers and thus learned to attach greater importance to individual reliability than to group membership.

Commerce across cultures can be profitable, but it is risky. In coping with the risks, capitalists learned ways of dealing with remote circumstances. They acquired, in Haskell's phrase, "recipes for intervention," or what a social scientist would call a sense of efficacy. By this route, some came to believe that it was possible, as well as desirable, to challenge slavery. Haskell does not argue that capitalism was inherently a moral argument against slavery, only that it was a cultural, as well as economic, movement that contained within its assumptions and practices certain preconditions—beliefs, experiences, recipes—for expanding the humanitarian sensibility to strangers. This

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cultural change made possible, in about the length of one man's life, the abolition of a practice supported by custom, profits, argument, and property rights.

Capitalism and bureaucracy

Capitalism is a system of action, but it is also one in which large-scale institutions operate. Like politics, economics creates bureaucracies, and bureaucracies have a logic different from that of either markets or politics. A large enterprise, whether private or public, tends to generate commitments to co-workers and subunits rather than to the enterprise as a whole, to separate employees from the customers or citizens affected by employee actions, and to operate on the basis of standard operating procedures that seem instrumentally rational even when they are substantively irrational. In short, bureaucracy diffuses or displaces the sense of personal responsibility. Firms differ from government agencies in many important respects, but this does not mean that they are free from the vices attendant on large-scale organization. There may be economic returns to scale, but not moral ones.

With all the talk about white-collar crime, we have remarkably little information about what kinds of organizational arrangements stimulate or impede misconduct. Big firms probably are more likely than smaller ones to obey certain laws and regulations because they have a more visible reputation to protect and the financial resources to hire specialists to do the protecting (for example, by discovering and complying with government rules). But big firms may be less inclined to right conduct of a different sort—that is, fair play in the most general sense.

One meaning of fairness is the Golden Rule: Treat customers, workers, and suppliers as you would wish to be treated under the same circumstances. That rule, however, will operate differently when the other party is dealt with at second or third hand, invisibly and impersonally, than when he is confronted personally. Even when we deal with a person face to face, we often find it quite easy to invent rationales for discounting their interests or rejecting their claims: "This guy is (take your pick) different, insincere, or unworthy." But it is much easier to conceive of other people as convenient ab-

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stractions when they are known only by labels, words, or numbers, as is likely the case when we are members of a large organization.

Fairness can also be defined as receiving rewards proportional to effort. In face-to-face transactions, effort is the product delivered or the service rendered, and rewards are the cash received or the thanks expressed. In impersonal transactions, effort may be the skill displayed at currying favor from one's superiors and rewards the promotions and preferment that result from successful currying. Bureaucratization not only insulates some parts of a firm from market forces but also isolates them from human forces. Bureaucratization involves specialization that often implies encapsulation, reducing the proportion of workers who deal intimately and regularly with other specialists. (In sociological jargon, there is a decline in boundary-spanning roles.)

Bureaucratization also requires measures of employee achievement that are poor proxies for market success. In a firm, a successful accountant, lawyer, or personnel officer is rarely the one who has increased profits or sales for the enterprise (managers rarely can know whether these people have materially helped or hurt profits); it is the person who has best conformed with higher-level expectations as to how an accountant, lawyer, or personnel officer is supposed to behave (and these may be reasonable, unreasonable, or self-serving expectations).

Robert Jackall, in his book *Moral Mazes,* explores how managers in two large corporations define the rules, and thus implicitly the moral requirements, of their jobs. In both firms, he found struggles for status and dominance, perceived gaps between reward and merit, and a preoccupation with the maintenance of good public relations over sound policy. Managers seeking advancement had to keep their eye out for "the main chance," and that, in turn, meant, among other things, "unrelenting attentiveness to the social intricacies of one's organization." The tone of Jackall's book suggests that he is no friend of corporations, but his detailed observations cannot for that reason be ignored.

Corporate executives are aware that they live at a time when great attention is paid to "corporate responsibility" and

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"business ethics." Observers who are well-disposed toward capitalism and suspicious of elite fads may dismiss these preoccupations as mere catering to a hostile media. That would be a mistake. Though much of this talk may be fatuous or superficial, the problem of imbuing large-scale enterprise with a decent moral life is fundamental. Chester Barnard made this clear nearly 60 years ago in *The Functions of the Executive*. However ready people are to comply with the self-regarding demands of a group and conform to the narrow culture of an organization, most people know the difference between doing things they are proud to tell their children about and things they hope their children never find out about.

Serious executives know this and worry about it. The emergence of codes of corporate ethics and the emphasis on fashioning a defensible corporate culture are not, I think, merely public relations (though they are sometimes just that). They are, at their best, a recognition that people want to believe that they live and work in a reasonably just and decent world. Americans are gloomy about the decency of their culture and the justice of their politics; it may be one of the supreme ironies of our time that they are often more satisfied with their employer than with their community. If true, Marx has been stood squarely on his head: Life has become more alienating than work.

As Michael Novak has observed, the corporation is an important mediating structure that stands, like the family and the church, between the individual and the state. It constitutes not simply a utilitarian arrangement but a community of sorts that shapes human conduct. People, of course, know the difference between a profit-making firm, on the one hand, and a child-rearing family or a soul-comforting church, on the other. They have different expectations from each. But no economist should suppose that since firms are about profits, that is all they are about, anymore than he should imagine that because families are about sex, that is all they are about. Corporations are not vehicles for realizing the ideal society; one of their good features, as Paul Johnson has noted, is that they attach little value to Utopian causes. But they are systems of human action that cannot for long command the loyalty of their members if their standards of collective action

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are materially lower than those of their individual members.

Capitalism is not irrelevant to morality: It assumes the existence of certain moral dispositions, strengthens some of these, and threatens still others. The problem for capitalists is to recognize that, while free markets will ruthlessly eliminate inefficient firms, the moral sentiments of man will only gradually and uncertainly penalize immoral ones. But, while the quick destruction of inefficient corporations threatens only individual firms, the slow anger at immoral ones threatens capitalism—and thus freedom—itself.

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Black and white after thirty years

NATHAN GLAZER

THERE is nothing that concentrates the mind on an issue more sharply than discovering one has been wrong about it. Twenty years ago, in an article in *The Public Interest*, I dealt with the subject of the continuing concentration of blacks in American cities and their separation in residence from whites.* The article was occasioned by Anthony Downs's 1973 book, *Opening Up the Suburbs: An Urban Strategy for America*. (This article, in expanded form, became part of my 1975 book, *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy*.) This apparently historically unique degree of concentration—one could call it "segregation," but I would prefer to reserve that term for state-imposed separation—had been well documented in research of the 1950s and 1960s, and was already under attack in the 1960s and 1970s by a variety of new federal policies, legislative, administrative, and judicial. Anthony Downs had even

* "On Opening Up the Suburbs," *The Public Interest*, Number 37, Fall 1974.

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more extensive policies to propose.

All this, I argued, was unnecessary. Blacks would become residentially more integrated with whites as their economic circumstances improved and their political power increased; in sum, as they drew closer in all respects to whites. And, could we not expect all this to happen as a result of the powerful antidiscrimination legislation of 1964 and 1965? We could so expect.

But whatever the changes that have occurred in the black condition, in this respect, in the degree of concentration of blacks in specific areas of cities, in some selected suburbs, and in the isolation of blacks residentially, there has been no change of any significance in 20 years.

Unrealized expectations

Of course, there are many respects in which the expectations of the 1960s and 1970s in regard to the black condition and black-white relations have not been fulfilled. If any well-informed person had been asked at the time of the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 to project how matters would stand 30 years ahead, it is hard to believe that he would have predicted the degree of separation between blacks and whites—we would now have to say, between blacks and non-blacks, because the growing numbers of Asians and Latinos are almost as separated from blacks as are whites—in residence, in school achievement, in economic conditions, in family patterns, in attitudes, that exists today.

There were good reasons to believe in the mid-1970s, as I did, that the pattern of residential concentration and isolation was going to change for the better and that further governmental intervention—whether to strengthen the prohibition of discrimination in rental and sales and realtor behavior or to impose integration measures on new developments or to integrate through public measures housing projects—was not necessary. We could argue over such matters, but it seemed to me it was now basically up to the processes of social change, abetted by the expected increased economic and social mobility of blacks, to alter the pattern of black concentration or segregation.

One has to go back 20 years and get a sense of the period

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to make the case that at the time these views seemed justifiable. In 1975, one still had good reason to believe that the remarkable revolution in civil-rights law of the 1960s would spur the improvement in the economic, educational, housing, and neighborhood conditions of American blacks, which had, to some degree, already been evident in the postwar period.

Ben Wattenberg and others at the time published articles demonstrating the increased percentage of blacks becoming middle class in occupation and earnings. In 1966, Irving Kristol had written an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, "The Negro Today is like the Immigrant Yesterday," a title that would strike us now with a certain irony but which then made perfect sense. It made sense to me. I had argued the same in *Beyond the Melting Pot* in 1963. Of course, when we spoke of immigrants in the mid-1960s, we weren't thinking about *new* immigrants to the United States—we were comparing blacks to the immigrants of the past. Despite the passage of an immigration reform act in 1965, the immigrants were then people of yesterday, and no one expected that mass immigration to the United States would resume in the future.

One had reason in 1966, and perhaps as late as 1975, to expect that indeed the American Negro, as he was then called, would follow the course of previous European immigrants, the "tenement trail," as Sam Lubell labeled it. After all, compared to European immigrants, the American Negro was still a relative newcomer in the cities of the North and West; and now that we had powerful civil-rights legislation, what would prevent his rise?

There were those who still called for further massive federal measures, greater than those already in place, in education, housing, employment training, income support, and other areas, to improve conditions in cities and for American blacks. But we were already in a period of federal (and state and local) fiscal constraint, from which we have never emerged. In any case, there had already been a great expansion of federal programs in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, in the field of housing segregation alone, there was the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (supplemented in 1974 by the Housing and Community Development Act, which required communities, before they could receive federal grants, to prepare a detailed "housing-assis-

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tance plan," taking account of the needs of low-income families); the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974, which prohibited discrimination in home lending and required banks to compile information on the race of loan applicants and recipients; a 1976 court order that required three federal agencies to collect racial data on home loan applicants; the 1975 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, which required banks to report on the neighborhood pattern of their loans; the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act, requiring banks to demonstrate that they were providing loans to low-income areas. One could undoubtedly add other measures.

How groups rise

Was more necessary to assist the rise of blacks? Twenty years ago, one could believe, and I did believe, that more was not necessary—that the measures banning discrimination in employment, education, housing, and government programs were sufficient; that the agencies policing these measures were competent; that the civil-rights groups watching the agencies were vigilant; that the courts, which would respond to their complaints on the effectiveness of enforcement, were sympathetic. One could believe that American blacks would follow the path of European immigrants now that state-imposed restrictions were lifted and private discrimination in key areas was banned.

Others did believe that more was necessary, and Anthony Downs, making his argument in *Opening Up the Suburbs*, was among them. The federal government was then engaged, as it still is, in efforts to go beyond the banning of overt and direct discrimination. We had extensive efforts at integration—in employment, through affirmative action; in education, through cases calling for desegregation by means of busing; in housing, where various schemes and programs were afoot to integrate better publicly subsidized housing and to require integration in private development. To such intrusive measures of integration, I was opposed, and I expressed this opposition in *Affirmative Discrimination*. The European immigrants had not needed them, I argued, and American blacks would not need them as their educational attainment increased and their earnings rose, and as they entered white-collar and professional

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and managerial occupations in greater numbers. Integration in schools and colleges, as well as in housing and residence, would follow in due course.

I asserted that there was a good deal of ignorance of the ethnic and racial patterns of American life among those who saw every degree of separation of blacks from whites as the result of prejudice and discrimination and set as a measure of equality the even distribution of blacks in all areas of life. There was an equal measure of ignorance of our ethnic and racial history among those who assumed that the breakup of concentrations of blacks by government action was necessary for black advancement. No ethnic or racial group had shown this "even distribution."

Black concentrations could have been matched by Jewish or Italian concentrations earlier in the century. In every group, there was some tendency to prefer propinquity to family and friends and churches and social institutions. Differences in tastes and culture led to a different pattern of institutional facilities and local businesses in residential neighborhoods. Many factors, quite independent of prejudice and discrimination, made some clustering of ethnic and racial groups inevitable and indeed natural. A decent respect for freedom of association and for the differences among people should be observed by government, and it should stand back from efforts to push the desired objective of integration. For this would in any case happen, as a result of inevitable economic, political, and social changes.

These views, whatever evidence could have been collected to support them in the middle 1970s, now strike me as too complacent. Some of these expected changes did take place. But in one area, housing and residential integration, what then seemed to me to be reasonable expectations have remained unrealized. Indeed, the mid-1970s now emerge, as in *A Common Destiny*, the important study of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, as a turning point, in which progress, according to various measures—such as the percentages of blacks going to college or the percentages in poverty—stopped.

Why this improvement, evident since World War II, did not continue is not easy to explain. This is not to say that

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there have not been measures that do show continuous improvement in the condition of American blacks. The number of those elected to public offices has continued to increase, as has the percentage moving into white-collar and managerial occupations and the number attaining middle-class standards. But, on other fronts, the expected improvements did not take place or showed the most minimal change. Among these were measures of residential integration.

Does intermarriage matter?

American blacks, it turned out, were not like the immigrants of yesterday or the ones of today, who have become so numerous in the wake of the immigration reform of 1965. These are differences that must concern us, and they lead us to think seriously again about why, 30 years after the great breakthrough in civil-rights legislation, and despite the massive and revolutionary change in the attitudes of the American public, we are still, in some key respects, two nations. Consequences flow from that separation which I believe continue to widen our differences, despite all the effort and all the change that should have led us to expect their narrowing. On these differences, one could present a host of statistics. I will refer to only three phenomena, which to me are peculiarly symptomatic of our situation.

Concerning one, we hear little, and indeed it is not much studied: intermarriage. Intermarriage may well be considered the last step in assimilation. Sociologists have so considered it. After we become ready to work in politics together, to earn our living together, to go to school together, to live together in the same communities, it is not surprising that this increasing togetherness should lead for many to intermarriage. Intermarriage is so crucial a final step because it does more than mark the attraction between two individuals—it marks the highest degree of social acceptance. One is almost embarrassed to present this sociological bromide, but one must justify bringing in intermarriage as a significant element in judging the quality of relations among races and ethnic groups. After all, is not equality in political rights, education, earnings, and housing sufficient? Why bring in this most intimate of social ties? One does so because it is an indication that the other

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things bringing groups together are working.

Blacks stand out uniquely among the array of American ethnic and racial groups in the degree to which marriage remains within the group. Among European ethnic groups, as we are well aware, intermarriage means that the boundaries that mark off groups have blurred to the point where ethnic identity has become, for increasing numbers of Americans, a matter of choice as to which among a number of ancestries they shall choose to identify with, if any. This is the import of the work of Richard Alba (*Ethnic Identity*), Mary Waters (*Ethnic Options*), and Stanley Lieberson. And while ethnic identity—or the choice of an ethnic identity for one or another purpose—will go on for a long time, it will become more and more blurred.

Even American Jews, the group that has been most distinctive in maintaining its ethnic identity, one sustained not only by a common history but by a distinctive religion, bolstered by a unique tragedy, and guarded by a strong social and religious reluctance to accept intermarriage, show an intermarriage rate among current marriages of 50 percent or more. Sociologists and demographers who study American Jews now must take account—and it is perplexing how to do so—of a growing penumbra of non-Jews and part-Jews who live in Jewish (and non-Jewish) households. This penumbra can only grow to the point where, in one or two or three generations, American Jews are reduced to a resistant core and a growing surround of persons with some Jewish ancestry and some Jewish identity. (Of course, all projections of this sort are to be understood with the caveat, "if no major counterforces intervene.") For other European ethnic groups, rates of intermarriage are much higher than among Jews.

The intermarriage rates for Asian and Hispanic groups, large percentages of whom are recent immigrants, who we would expect to be most deeply rooted within their group in language, custom, and culture, are also surprisingly high. Various studies show current intermarriage rates of 30 percent or higher for the past 20 years.

Where do blacks stand? One need only look at one table in the authoritative study of American ancestry groups by Stanley Lieberson and Mary Waters, *From Many Strands: Ethnic and*

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Racial Groups in Contemporary America, to illustrate the remarkably distinct position of blacks. The table reports intermarriage among native-born women by (self-reported) racial and ancestry group from the census of 1980: For black women, the percentage for in-marriage to other blacks is 98.7. The next highest rates are for Puerto Rican women, 78.7 percent, and for Mexican women, 76 percent. For European groups, old and new, the figures are under 50 percent, generally far under. For black men, there is more outmarriage, especially outside the South, and a recent study does show a steady rise in these low percentages in the last few decades. But, even with black male intermarriage rates outside the South of about 10 percent, the overall pattern is distinct and unique: Blacks, who are not an immigrant group (though a rising percentage are indeed recent immigrants), have been resident on this soil for more generations than most white Americans, or Hispanic Americans, or Asian Americans, and are uniquely separated from other Americans by this measure of integration.

A second aspect of separation that has not received much attention is the capacity to communicate. Of course, all groups develop a distinctive vocabulary, idioms, formulations, and intonations. But the black poor seem to be drifting further away from standard English—undoubtedly one effect of isolation and concentration, and this adds an additional burden to the efforts to break out of the ghetto and poverty. This phenomenon, for which there is some research support, is probably spurred by ideological changes, by the shift in the attitudes of black leadership, and blacks generally, away from the assumption that the proper goal is assimilation toward support for various degrees of distinctiveness and difference. The research on this, principally by William Labove, is intriguing, but I think common experience on this point is more persuasive.

Thirty years after the great effort in public law to bring us together, does one detect any lessening of the distinctive patterns of black English among the black poor and among the young blacks often featured in television programs on one or another social or educational problem? If anything, they are maintained and strengthened. Probably other factors than simple isolation are involved—such as the rise of a distinctive black identity in which the abandonment of linguistic distinctiveness

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is seen as a form of group betrayal. This will be interpreted differently at different class levels, and the signs of continuing group solidarity will vary enormously as one moves from ghetto youths to corporate lawyers. But even in the most elite groups, some sign of linguistic distinctiveness, however etiolated, is maintained.

Explaining residential concentration

We have already referred to the third measure that shows a unique degree of separation and undoubtedly contributes to low intermarriage rates and differences in speech: the residential concentration of blacks. The facts have been developed most starkly and presented most effectively in Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's recent book *American Apartheid: Segregation and The Making of the Underclass*. Thirty years after the civil-rights revolution and the revolutionary change in the legal posture affecting discrimination, the situation described in this book can only be characterized as extremely depressing. The authors develop measures of both "segregation" and "isolation," calculated on different bases and reflecting somewhat different realities, but the picture for both indices reflects so high a degree of separation that it is hardly necessary to go into the details. Comparing 1970 and 1980, they write:

> Among the oldest and largest northern ghettoes ... there was virtually no sign of progress in residential integration. In Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Gary, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and St. Louis, the decline in the segregation index was 4 points or less, and in two metropolitan areas (New York and Newark) segregation actually *increased* over the decade.

There were more substantial declines in Columbus, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, but they attribute these declines to "unusual instability in housing patterns caused by a combination of gentrification, immigration, and rapid housing construction rather than to an ongoing process of neighborhood racial integration." All the more benign explanations of this remarkable stability of racial segregation collapse on investigation.

Is this the pattern we might expect from new immigrants

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or new migrants into cities? Recency of migration does not explain it: Black communities in the North and West are no longer fed by heavy immigration from the South, and this has been the case for 20 years or more. Nevertheless, the authors tell us that the levels of segregation in northern cities in 1980 were above the highest ever recorded for European ethnic groups.

Is this the same pattern we find for other nonwhite groups? Is it a general "minority" pattern? As in the case of intermarriage, it is not: "The high level of segregation experienced by blacks today is ... unique compared with the experience of other large minority groups, such as Hispanics and Asians." Black residential isolation is as out of line compared with Asian or Hispanic as black intermarriage.

Is this only a central-city pattern, and can we expect its mitigation as more blacks move into suburbs? Perhaps we can, but black suburbanization increases very slowly. The overwhelming majority of blacks are still in central cities. Insofar as suburbanization has increased, much of it has been into suburban areas that are in effect extensions of central-city black areas, or into suburbs that have become dominantly black. Black segregation is lower when we consider metropolitan areas, including their suburbs, as a whole, but not markedly lower.

Is this pattern mitigated for blacks of higher income? Not at all. Segregation is as severe for those with incomes above $50,000 as for those below.

Is it the effect of black desires, black tastes? Do blacks prefer to live in black areas? Not really. Blacks have been asked in public opinion surveys what kind of neighborhood they would prefer to live in: "By large majorities, blacks support the ideal of integration and express a preference for integrated living and 95 percent are willing to live in neighborhoods that are anywhere between 15 percent and 70 percent black."

But here we do have a problem in the interaction between the level of integration blacks would find comfortable or prefer and the level whites would find comfortable or prefer. Massey and Denton report that many surveys show that "blacks strongly prefer a 50-50 mixture, and that whites have little

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tolerance for racial mixture beyond 20 percent black." The relationship between these preferences results in instability. I am not suggesting that the proportion of blacks and whites in a neighborhood is the only, or even necessarily the decisive, factor in decisions to move out of, or into, a neighborhood. But in a society of high mobility, such as ours is, with one-fifth of the households of the country moving every year, even a modest preference in the residential racial mix preferred will have, over time, a substantial effect on the areas they move from and the areas they move to.

Prejudice or preference?

Thomas Schelling demonstrated this 25 years ago in *The Public Interest*.* His demonstration was elegant and decisive. Take a checkerboard, he said, and distribute nickels and dimes on it at random, with 10 percent of the coins nickels and a few spaces empty. Then move one coin at a time into an empty space, with only this rule: The nickel would like to have at least one of its neighboring spaces occupied by a nickel and the dime would like to have one of its neighboring spaces occupied by a dime. In a relatively few moves, the nickels begin to concentrate in one section of the checkerboard. If the preference is for two neighboring nickels, or two neighboring dimes, the concentration will occur faster.

But what underlies this process? To Massey and Denton, it is prejudice. To me, the matter is more complicated. It is preference, based on a range of factors. In some cases—particularly in white working-class neighborhoods—it is indeed prejudice, intense and direct. This is well documented in studies of such neighborhoods, but one scarcely needs the studies—the newspaper reports are enough. But this prejudice is also based, to some degree, on the experience of lower-class black neighborhoods. It is not easy to separate out from prejudice the influence of fears that, with an increase in black occupancy, crime will increase, schools will decline, and house values will drop.

In enlightened middle-class neighborhoods, with a commitment to the ideal of integration, the fears of what kind of

* "On the Ecology of Micromotives," *The Public Interest*, Number 25, Fall 1971.

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change will occur with an increase in black occupancy may have little to do with prejudice, as ordinarily understood. But, in these neighborhoods, there will also be fears that crime will increase, property values will decline, schools will become poorer. These fears are shared by blacks and whites. (This was demonstrated most decisively by Richard P. Taub, D. Garth Taylor, and Jan D. Duncan in their important book *Paths of Neighborhood Change: Race and Crime in Urban America*. They show that there is little difference between blacks and whites in their expectation that more blacks will mean more crime and a decline in property values.)

Whether low-income or middle-income, prejudiced or unprejudiced, neighborhoods will organize, using different methods and appeals, to restrain the increase in black occupancy. When houses are the largest part of the wealth of a family, it is understandable that homeowners will act with as much caution as bondholders, who are ready to move billions on the basis of fears that to many of us appear minuscule.

The Schelling demonstration that small preferences, or, if you will, a relatively modest degree of prejudice, can produce large effects may save American society from the charge of being irredeemably racist: but the consequences, in terms of separation and segregation, seem to be remarkably similar. Working-class attitudes may be more prejudiced than middle-class attitudes—in any case, the expression of prejudice is more direct and unmodulated—but behavior will still aim at either exclusion of blacks or the restriction of black entry; often leading, if restriction fails, to a rapid turnover of an area, leaving it almost totally black. The sharp decline in the racist sentiments of the American population in the past 30 years, and I do not dismiss this decline as simply a matter of people being polite and proper to the opinion pollsters, has done remarkably little to change the overall pattern of black concentration, of black isolation from the rest of the population. Schelling's demonstration explains, in part, why such a sharp decline in negative attitudes can have such modest effects on the overall pattern of segregation, but the segregation remains.

And it has, I believe, serious consequences, even though social scientists continue to debate whether there is a "conta-

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gion" effect—whether the indices of dysfunction among the black poor would be the same or different if they were spread out and integrated rather than concentrated and isolated. However the more sophisticated research comes out, most of us will believe that the segregation of the black poor in the central cities has serious consequences. Those behaviors with which we are all familiar from television and the newspapers—a high rate of crime, juvenile delinquency, poor school performance, out-of-wedlock births, and the rest—must be accentuated by the effect of concentration and the absence of alternative role models (even though social scientists are not yet agreed that they can demonstrate that there are effects based on this concentration independent of other factors).

Separation, as well as differences in interest, contributes to blacks and whites coming to see the world differently. The surprisingly large divergence shown in public opinion polls between blacks and non-blacks as to O.J. Simpson's guilt is only the most striking instance of how blacks and whites, even of the same class and occupation and income, have come to see the world differently. The divergencies between black and non-black emerge as sharply in the developing debate on affirmative action. Of course, blacks and whites may have different views even when they live next to each other, but I believe residential isolation makes a considerable contribution to these stark differences in outlook.

The crumbling of good intentions

It is at this point, when we lay out the facts, which cannot be explained away, and when we lay out the consequences, about which we can still argue, that the difficult part begins. What is to be done? Can anything be done? Twenty years ago, we thought the increase in the education and income and occupational level of blacks, as long as we policed against discrimination, would ameliorate the problem, leaving us with degrees of concentrations of blacks no greater than what we see among other groups in the American ethnic and racial flux. It didn't happen.

Proposing activist policies to promote integration is generally the way in which such a discussion ends. That is the way Anthony Downs ended *Opening Up the Suburbs* 20 years ago,

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that is the way Massey and Denton end *American Apartheid*. But such proposals exude an air of futility even as they are laid out. One can require public-housing agencies to have policies of racial integration; one can require banks to provide mortgages for blacks in non-black areas; one can require secondary agencies, such as the Federal National Mortgage Association, to require banks to issue more mortgages to blacks, enabling them to buy in white areas; one can have government-oversight agencies require secondary mortgage agencies to impose such requirements; and on and on. One can require that new developments put aside a certain percentage of units for low-income families and/or for blacks, and these requirements can be variously federal, state, local, judicial. Many more examples of such policies, proposed and implemented, could be given. A whole vocabulary has grown up around such efforts, marked by landmark decades-old cases, such as Gautreaux and Mt. Laurel.

But even as one spells out the litany of possible activist interventions, the accompanying litany of objections, problems, and difficulties in implementing them unrolls before the eyes of anyone who has had any experience with these efforts. In the case of school busing, partially implemented and doubtfully successful, government measures inspired by an ideal of fairness, equality, and integration cannot overcome stubborn family commitments to what is seen as best for their children and their neighborhood. Against these bedrock sentiments, all good intentions and all well-designed policies crumble. Efforts to integrate housing and neighborhoods have shown no greater success.

Even the best of policies has negative consequences. Efforts to integrate public-housing projects often integrate elderly whites (what other poor whites are available?) with young black families, providing a terrible environment for the elderly and only reinforcing their prejudices against blacks. Sometimes private developers of rental projects, trying to maintain an integrated community, will make special efforts to recruit white tenants—but then will get sued, either by the NAACP or the government, for discriminating against blacks. This is what happened to Starrett City in Brooklyn. Liberal suburban neighborhoods, seeing a slow drift to black majority residence,

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will make a special effort to recruit white families when houses become available, will advertise their community to whites, and will create programs to assist white families to move in. The aim is integration, but how different from discrimination will that appear to suspicious black civil-rights agencies or, indeed, black neighbors? Neither black civil-rights organizations nor government agencies may be willing to make the distinction between discriminating against blacks and trying to maintain integration, and indeed, the distinction is not easy to make: Activist community efforts to maintain an integrated community require discrimination.

There are creative programs: Guaranteeing to white homeowners in areas undergoing transition that the value of their property will not fall, for example. But how different is that from discrimination? And how extensive can such programs be, and how effective, when homeowners hope for unrealistic increases in the value of their property?

In Boston in the 1970s, the mayor and the banks agreed to make a major commitment to provide below-rate mortgages to blacks moving into a then-white middle- and lower-income homeowning community. The objective was improving housing conditions among blacks, but certainly there was no expectation that the neighborhood would go all black. Integration was also expected, and an area for this large program was selected in which it could be foreseen that violence would not be used against entering blacks (the area was Jewish rather than Irish or Italian). Real estate agents then moved in, warning the whites in the neighborhood to get out fast before blacks moved in, and pressuring black families to take mortgages they couldn't afford—you can spell out the rest. The neighborhood changed, and declined, rapidly. The ghetto expanded. The story is told in Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon's *The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions*. Perhaps the program was implemented poorly, but one cannot deny the good intentions. Even the somewhat suspicious chroniclers and analysts of this debacle accept that the intentions were good.

Whatever the virtue of these and other policies—and their virtues are to be found generally more in the intentions of their implementers than in their effects—who can expect them

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to be adopted on any large scale in the present political mood or, indeed, in any foreseeable future political mood? The two Democratic administrations that have been inserted into 30 years of Republican presidential dominance have been understandably more sympathetic to such measures than the Republican administrations, but very little has been accomplished. The history of policy efforts to integrate neighborhoods and communities has been one of many schemes, and extended and endless litigation, and very small successes.

Modest policy successes

And yet there are successes, small-scale, painful, often expensive. There are successes in the maintenance of integrated residential neighborhoods, generally upper middle class, and there is more moderate success in some programs to move central-city blacks out of the more concentrated and segregated areas. Richard Taub and his collaborators have documented some of the former in Chicago, a highly segregated city. We have similar successes in the St. Louis and Cleveland areas and elsewhere.

But Taub also documents how perilous and how much on the edge these successes are if the measure is the maintenance of integration. They have often involved heavy institutional commitments, such as those by the University of Chicago, and such actors are only available in some neighborhoods. They are assisted by the inherent attractiveness of housing in some neighborhoods—and this generally means older housing, built at a time when size and ornament and craftsmanlike elaboration characterized urban housing for the upper middle class. Such neighborhoods are not to be found in profusion. Those engaged in the effort to maintain these integrated neighborhoods must often fight against civil-rights groups who see all differentiation in attracting or assisting new movers as discrimination (which it is, in the strict sense), and by militant groups who claim that "gentrification" is driving out the poor, even when such neighborhoods are marked by abandoned and under-used housing. What one learns from such neighborhood stories is that the effort to maintain integration must be just that, an effort.

This is not to say it must be a difficult effort in all cases. If

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the area is far from expanding black areas, if the values of its properties are high, integration does not necessarily mean increasing crime, value decline, and neighborhood deterioration; there are hundreds of such areas, unremarked upon and unrecorded in the sociological literature. It is inevitable that there will be more such neighborhoods as the black middle class expands. They are demonstrations of what happens when people with some resources follow their natural interests: integration. That is the effect I expected 20 years ago. The environment of civil-rights laws, increasing opportunity and achievement for many blacks, and the change to more tolerant attitudes have had their effect. But the number of black families living in such circumstances is relatively small.

And so the expansion of such areas makes no apparent impact on Massey and Denton's measures of segregation and isolation, though they do mark some success in the integration of African Americans into American society. Our attention, however, is concentrated, for good reason, on the isolation of the black poor. This is the "black ghetto," the persistence of which has told us that today's blacks, alas, whatever the cause, are not the immigrants of yesterday but reflect a rather more profound divide in American society.

"One by one"

Here the prognosis is hardly encouraging. The leading candidate for an impact on the isolation of the black ghetto at the moment is the Gautreaux process in Chicago, where, following lawsuits attacking the racial isolation in Chicago's public-housing projects, a program has been implemented by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in which 5,000 low-income families have been relocated into white suburban areas. The scale of this enterprise demands a more extended discussion than is possible in this article. It seems successful, as measured by the ability to find suburban landlords who would accept subsidized inner-city female-headed families, by the recruitment of such families to make the move, by the contentment of these families with their new houses and neighborhoods, by the effects on the children. The success of a program on such a scale has led Henry Cisneros and Housing and Urban Development to try to expand it, but that

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effort is hostage to the fate of appropriations for the heavy housing subsidies that are required by the program.

But, in the end, whatever the good of the Gautreaux program, one is doubtful about its effects in bringing blacks and whites together. Its scale can never match the huge size of the inner-city black ghettoes. Perhaps more importantly, it aims at bringing together the black and generally the non-working poor in subsidized apartments and houses with the non-black working and middle class. Even Anthony Downs, that indefatigable proponent of measures to advance integration, coined in 1974 the phrase "Dispersed Economic Integration" to describe his objective. He meant that bringing together the races was hard enough without adding the further difficulty of bringing together the classes, something which the pattern of American urban development has never been good at doing. Our expectation has always been that the poor improve themselves by becoming less poor and leave the ghetto by moving to the neighborhoods of the less poor. They do not improve themselves by inserting themselves, before their economic circumstances enable it, into areas they cannot afford—or worse, to describe Gautreaux properly, by being inserted by government into areas they cannot afford. To the cultural differences of race, not insubstantial, are then added the cultural differences of class. To expect this to work, to take this as a model, is to demand too much.

Government action can never match, in scale and impact, the crescive effects of individual, voluntary decision. This is what has raised group after group, this is what has broken down the boundaries of ethnicity and race (yes, race, when it comes to some races) in the past. But these effects have operated excruciatingly slowly when it comes to American blacks. They have operated to some extent, as we see by the greatly expanded number of blacks making middle-class incomes, by the creation of integrated middle-class neighborhoods. It is the scale that has been so disappointing. Why our expectations were so disappointed is still obscure to me, and all the research does not make it clearer. We have to go to the disaster that encompasses the black family, the failure to close educational achievement gaps, the rise of worklessness among black males, the increase in crime, and, behind all these,

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there are other factors in infinite regress.

This failure leads many to propose larger-scale governmental action, unlikely as the prospects for such are in the present and foreseeable political climate. But even if that climate were better, it is hard to see what government programs could achieve. They would be opposed by the strongest motives that move men and women: their concern for family, children, and property. However wrong I was in expecting more rapid change to result from the civil-rights revolution, a greater measure of government effort to promote residential integration directly was not the answer, and is still not the answer. The forces that will produce it are still individual and voluntaristic, rather than governmental and authoritative. To adapt the title of Glenn Loury's book, it will have to be "one by one," individual by individual, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood. Slowly as these work, there is really no alternative.

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American conservatism 1945-1995

IRVING KRISTOL

THE *Public Interest* was born well before the term "neoconservative" was invented, and will—I trust—be alive and active when the term is of only historical interest. That time may even be now, as the distinction between conservative and neoconservative has been blurred almost beyond recognition. Still, the distinction has not yet been entirely extinguished—it still turns up when Jeane Kirkpatrick's views on foreign policy are mentioned—so this may be a suitable moment to look back and define the role that neoconservatism, and *The Public Interest* specifically, has played in the history of American conservatism since the end of World War II. (A quite different, but equally useful, essay could be written on its role in the history of postwar liberalism.)

In that half-century, as I see it, American conservatism has gone through three stages.

First there was the renewal of what might be called traditional conservatism, centered around William F. Buckley's *National Review* and having the goal of reprogramming the Re-

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publican party into a solidly conservative political instrument. This led to the nomination of Barry Goldwater in 1964 and the ensuing electoral debacle. That debacle, however, had the result of consolidating and expanding conservative influence within the Republican party. This is not as paradoxical as it appears. After all, the comparable debacle of McGovern's defeat in 1972 resulted in the left wing of American liberalism, whose candidate he was, gaining effective control of the Democratic party. Inner-party dynamics can be far more important than election results, on which the media and public attention naturally focus.

Second, there was the influence of the neoconservative impulse. Originally, this impulse looked to the Democratic party for political expression, but by the mid-1970s that was obviously an expectation difficult to sustain, and a gradual, often reluctant, shift toward the Republican party got under way. (There are still quite a few Democratic neoconservatives, most of whom by now quietly vote Republican.) *The Public Interest* was the focal point of this neoconservative impulse, though much of its impact was the result of its influence on the younger men and women who were ensconced in the editorial and "op-ed" departments of the *Wall Street Journal*. Neoconservatism differed in many important respects from traditional conservatism, but had no program of its own. Basically, it wanted the Republican party to cease playing defensive politics, to be forward-looking rather than backward-looking. Some of us actually dared to suggest that the party should be more "ideological," although "ideology" is not a term pleasing to American ears. In the end, the notion of an activist "agenda" has become ever more integral to Republican political thinking, doing the work of "ideology" though in a peculiarly pragmatic American way. The substance of any specific agenda may not have much to do with neoconservatism, but the moving spirit does.

Third, there has been the emergence, over the past decades, of religion-based, morally concerned, political conservatism. In the long run, this may be the most important of all. Though the media persist in portraying the religious conservatives as aggressive fanatics, in fact their motivation has been primarily defensive—a reaction against the popular counter-

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culture, against the doctrinaire secularism of the Supreme Court, and against a government that taxes them heavily while removing all traces of morality and religion from public education, for example, even as it subsidizes all sorts of activities and programs that are outrages against traditional morality. The religious faith behind this reaction has been steadily gaining in both intensity and popularity, especially among Protestant evangelicals, and may well now have a dynamism of its own. It is not at all unimaginable that the United States is headed for a bitter and sustained *Kulturkampf* that could overwhelm conventional notions of what is and what is not political.

Let me look at the evolution of postwar conservatism from the perspective of a neoconservative.

II

When *National Review* was founded in 1955, I regarded it as an eccentricity on the ideological landscape—it seemed so completely out of phase. Essentially it continued the polemic against the New Deal that characterized American conservatism, as represented by the Republican party, throughout the 1930s and 1940s. As a child of the depression who was outraged at the spectacle of idle factories, unused resources, and vast unemployment all coexisting, I could not take seriously the seemingly blind faith in "free enterprise" that was the primal certainty of *National Review*. I simply found this point of view irrelevant. So did practically everyone else at the time—at least the "everyone else" I knew or read.

To some aspects of the conservative message I was certainly vulnerable, even then. Though a liberal, I had never been enamored with those beliefs that constituted an orthodox liberal outlook. Thus, I had always been in favor of capital punishment. I never believed that criminality could be "cured" by therapeutic treatment. I never doubted that school prayer was a perfectly sensible idea. I was convinced that the "basics"—rote learning and memorization—offered the young the best opportunity for learning. I thought that "sexual permissiveness," in all its guises, was an absurd idea. I regarded the ideal of a "world without war" as utopian, and "making the world safe for democracy" a futile enterprise. So I could hon-

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estly say that I would welcome the appearance of a conservative magazine—a magazine that was reflective (in the Burke-Tocqueville tradition), one that would help refine and elevate public discourse. What I meant, I now suspect, was that I would welcome a conservative magazine that was not overly offensive to liberal sensibilities, a magazine that did not aim to destroy liberalism but to complement it.

National Review was certainly not that. It was brash, even vulgar in its antiliberal polemics. There was something collegiate—sophomoric, to be blunt—about its high-spiritedness, and its general tone was anti-intellectual. Above all, it seemed to me simple-minded in its "anti-statism" in general and its contempt for all social reforms in particular. There is little doubt that its "anti-statism" revivified, for a lot of people, even younger people, the dormant nerves of anti-New Deal fervor. Ten years earlier, the popularity of Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* had already signified the possibility of such a revival. But I had not read that book—and though I have come to admire his later writings in political philosophy and intellectual history, I still haven't read it. The reason is that I did not believe for a moment that the American people would allow themselves to be seduced or coerced along any such path. I deemed that kind of "anti-statism" to be a species of political hysteria, and I felt its reaction to the New Deal excessive. So I did not take *National Review* seriously as a political journal.

Which, it turns out, was a mistake—the kind of mistake that intellectuals are especially prone to make in politics. We say, repeatedly, that ideas have consequences, which is true but what we have in mind are complex, thoughtful, and well-articulated ideas. What we so easily overlook is the fact that simple ideas, allied to passion and organization, also have consequences. *National Review*, it turns out, was part of a larger movement that created institutions which shaped and trained several thousand young conservatives, not so much to go forth and proclaim the gospel, as to go into the Republican party and gain control of it. This they did, most effectively, over the next decade. The result was that it was Goldwater, and not Nelson Rockefeller, who was the Republican party's nominee in 1964. Nor did Goldwater's defeat change the reality that

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liberal Republicanism had suffered a mortal wound and the Eastern, "establishment" wing of the party had yielded dominance to the conservative wing. The Nixon years were a troubled time of transition, and for the younger conservatives in that administration it was a disaster. But the course had been set. It was the *National Review* idol Ronald Reagan who won the nomination in 1980, and today—despite the George Bush interregnum—the Republican party is unquestionably a conservative party. But what kind of conservative party? Much has happened since those early years in the 1950s, and the conservatism of *National Review* has largely been reshaped by the emergence of new currents of conservative thought.

III

One such current was what came to be called "neoconservatism," and its origins can be traced to the founding of *The Public Interest* 30 years ago. Not that the founders of this journal had any such political goal. We were all liberals, of a kind, in 1965. But it turned out that most of us were the kind of liberals who were destined to play a role in the conservative revival.

The dozen or so scholars and intellectuals who were the nucleus of the new venture were in a state of dissatisfaction with the liberal temper of the age. But at that time, the conservatism of *National Review* interested us not at all. There were many points of repulsion but it was *NR*s primordial (as we saw it) hostility to the New Deal that created a gulf between us and them. We were all children of the depression, most of us from lower-middle-class or working-class families, a significant number of us urban Jews for whom the 1930s had been years of desperation, and we felt a measure of loyalty to the spirit of the New Deal if not to all its programs and policies. Nor did we see it as representing any kind of "statist" or socialist threat to the American democracy. As James Q. Wilson, one of the "founding fathers," recently wrote in the *New Republic* (May 22, 1995):

> American liberalism, like America in general, is different. Created by the New Deal but drawing on features of the earlier Progressive movement, liberalism here, unlike the liberalism found in many European nations, never took seriously the idea of na-

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> tionalizing major industries, only occasionally and then without much conviction proposed any major distribution of income, and merely flirted with centralized economic planning. A welfare state was created, but compared to the welfare state in many other industrialized nations, the American version offered less generous benefits to the unemployed, provided no children's allowances and restricted tax-supported medical care to veterans, the elderly and the very poor.

All of us had ideas on how to improve, even reconstruct, this welfare state—we were meliorists, not opponents, and only measured critics. It was when the Great Society programs were launched that we began to distance ourselves, slowly and reluctantly, from the newest version of official liberalism.

But it was not only the Great Society that affected us. The *Zeitgeist* of the 1960s was, in retrospect, really quite bizarre. "Automation," for instance, was a prime bogeyman, as was the corollary prospect of a "push-button society" in which workers would experience a surfeit of leisure they were not equipped to handle. The Ford Foundation and other trendy institutions had many conferences and sponsored many books on "the problem of leisure," while Lyndon Johnson appointed a Commission on Automation. Fortunately, Daniel Bell was on that commission and, together with Robert Solow of M.I.T., he composed a sensible report. This experience with the Automation-Leisure scare moved Dan Bell and myself to contemplate the founding of this magazine. Someone, we felt, had to continue talking modest sense, even if grandiose nonsense was temporarily so very popular.

The tone of *The Public Interest*, from the outset, was skeptical, pragmatic, meliorist. We were especially provoked by the widespread acceptance of left-wing sociological ideas that were incorporated in the War on Poverty. The most egregious such idea was the Community Action Program, which would mobilize the urban poor, especially the black poor, to "fight city hall," literally. The prescribed cure for poverty was defined as militant political action, even revolutionary political action, that would result in the redistribution of income and wealth. This idea, spawned by the Jacobins in the French Revolution, has probably been the most popular and pernicious belief of the past two centuries, distorting expectations

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and destroying the economies of many a Third World country. We at *The Public Interest*, having known poverty at first hand—the authors of the War on Poverty were mainly upper-middle-class types—and witnessing the ways poverty was overcome in reality, by gradual economic growth with the concomitant growth of economic opportunity, were utterly contemptuous of this idea. And our attitude had surprising echoes in unexpected places.

The reason was that most of us were social scientists, and as Pat Moynihan put it, the best use of social science is to refute false social science. Since we live in an age when "experts" are overvalued, the social science in *The Public Interest* had its effect. Actually, one could have reached the same, sound conclusions from the study of history, or even just looking, not at people mired in poverty, but at those poor people who had managed to move out of poverty—people who were all around us. But that's not the kind of testimony that Congressional committees and the media were looking for.

As *The Public Interest* continued on its modest way, at first with a circulation of 2,000 to 3,000, all sorts of portentous things were happening around us—which made us feel, and made us appear to be, more conservative than we had anticipated. One was the student rebellion of the late 1960s, a rebellion aimed primarily at the liberal professoriate—the small minority of conservative professors were largely ignored. This assault reminded many liberal professors that their liberalism had implicit limits, beyond which lay some quite conservative assumptions about the nature of authority in general, and in a university in particular. There is nothing like the utopian idiocies of the extreme left—the "infantile" left, as Lenin called it—to stir thoughts of moderation among the centrist majority. And from such thoughts of moderation, some second thoughts about the implications of moderation are bound to develop, and these second thoughts will always, in that context or that situation, turn out to involve a conservative modification of the original liberalism.

The student rebellion had, of course, close ties with the emerging counterculture, which set out to scandalize and delegitimize the regnant liberalism in its own bold and brash way. Liberal professors and liberal intellectuals liked, at that

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time, to think of themselves as "broad-minded," but they were nevertheless shocked. It's one thing to give scholarly approval to historical, sociological, and psychological studies that demonstrated our conventional family structure to be less universal, more "culture bound," than one had realized. It is quite another thing to see one's children enticed into sexual promiscuity, drugs, and suicide. The liberal professoriate, and many members of the intellectual community, had always kept its distance from "bourgeois society," and always tried to be "objective" about bourgeois mores. Now, a great many discovered, albeit reluctantly, that they had been bourgeois all along.

Soon, *The Public Interest* no longer stood alone. *Commentary*, which had for some years flirted with the left, veered sharply in a neoconservative direction. Even more important was the arrival of Robert Bartley as editor of the editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal*. He quickly melded the familiar anti-statist views of the *Journal* with the neoconservative critique of contemporary liberalism. This trio of publications suddenly became something like a national force, and politicians and editorial writers began to pay attention.

What kind of force was it? It is not easy, even in retrospect, to answer that question in a crisp and clear way. I would say that there were three distinctive aspects to the neoconservative "movement" (a rather grandiose term, given its modest dimensions). First, the political tonality was different. This was surely the result of our liberal heritage, which predisposed us to be forward-looking, not in any sense dour and reactionary. I once remarked, semi-facetiously, that to be a neoconservative one had to be of a cheerful disposition, no matter how depressing the current outlook. In America all successful politics is the politics of hope, a mood not noticeable in traditional American conservatism. The way to win, in politics as in sport, is to think of yourself as a winner. The pathos of being proved right, while losing, is always a great temptation to a conservative minority in opposition.

Secondly, it follows that our natural impulse was melioristic. From the outset, I was mindful of the injunction of my first editor at *Commentary*, Elliot Cohen, that you can't beat a horse with no horse. Even while being critical of the Great Society, *The Public Interest* was always interested in propos-

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ing alternate reforms, alternate legislation, that would achieve the desired aims more securely, and without the downside effects. This was something that did not much interest traditional conservatism, with its emphatic "anti-statist" focus. The difference also had something to do with the fact that traditional conservatives had many distinguished economists in their ranks, and economics is above all the science of limits, a great nay-saying enterprise. Among the core social scientists around *The Public Interest* there were no economists. (They came later, as we "matured.") This explains my own rather cavalier attitude toward the budget deficit and other monetary or fiscal problems. The task, as I saw it, was to create a new majority, which evidently would mean a conservative majority, which came to mean, in turn, a Republican majority—so political effectiveness was the priority, not the accounting deficiencies of government.

Thirdly, neoconservatives—at least the New Yorkers among them—came out of an intellectual milieu, in which some large ideas—i.e., ideas with a philosophic or ideological dimension—were taken very seriously. This was of little significance in the early years of neoconservatism, but it did become very important as the nation found itself in a third stage of postwar conservative history, a stage in which religious conservatism became an active force in American politics.

IV

Active religion-based conservatism did not become a political force in the United States because of either religion or conservatism. Its activism was provoked by militant liberalism and the militant secularism associated with it. This liberalism and this secularism, in the postwar years, came to dominate the Democratic party, the educational establishment, the media, the law schools, the judiciary, the major schools of divinity, the bishops of the Catholic Church, and the bureaucracies of the "mainline" Protestant denominations. One day, so to speak, millions of American Christians—most of them, as it happens, registered Democrats—came to the realization that they were institutionally isolated and impotent. They quite naturally wanted their children to be raised as well-behaved Christians but discovered that their authority over their own

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children had been subverted and usurped by an aggressive, secular liberalism that now dominated our public education system and our popular culture. They looked at our high schools and saw that gay and lesbian organizations were free to distribute their literature to the students but that religious organizations were not. They saw condoms being distributed to adolescent teenagers while the Supreme Court forbade the posting of the Ten Commandments on the classroom wall. And so they rebelled and did the only thing left for them to do—they began to organize politically. In so doing they may very well have initiated a sea-change in American politics and American life.

Inevitably, the conservative Christians began to seek links with traditional conservatives, since they shared common enemies—liberal government, a left-liberal educational establishment, a judiciary besotted with liberal dogmas. But this alliance worked smoothly only up to a point. The trouble with traditional conservatism, especially those segments dominated by a purely economic conservatism, was that it tended to be libertarian and even secular-minded when it came to the kinds of moral and social issues that agitated Christian conservatives. There is an important difference between the kind of "liberty" dear to the hearts of economic conservatives and leaders of the business community, and the "ordered liberty" that any serious religion would have in mind. This contradiction became obvious in Ronald Reagan's appointees to the Federal Communications Commission, men who were enthusiastic about deregulation but indifferent about opening the doors to pornography. That same contradiction is today glaringly obvious within the Republican party, which economic conservatives have dominated ever since the post-Civil War period.

Oddly enough, the Christian conservatives found it easier to get along with the neoconservatives, many of whom come from an intellectual background and an intellectual milieu that is more concerned with criticizing liberalism than with criticizing "statism." It was primarily the neoconservative criticism of welfare for corrupting the souls of its recipients, as against the traditional conservative emphasis on the waste of taxpayers' money, that helped make welfare reform a major issue for religious conservatives. Similarly, the troubled condition of

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the modern family was a concern of both secular neoconservatives and Christian conservatives, before it became a popular conservative topic. Not that this now matters all that much, since the merger of neoconservatism and traditional conservatism, underway since the election of Ronald Reagan, is largely complete. Even the term, "neoconservative," is not much used, "conservative" now having stretched its meaning to be more inclusive. But today's traditional, libertarian, economically focused conservatives are still strong enough to win local or state-wide elections and to dominate the United States Senate. This is a source of constant irritation to Christian conservatives.

So the assimilation of Christian conservatives into American conservatism is still in its relatively early stages, and it is creating serious tensions. To some degree, this is because Christian conservatism is a "movement," not simply a political party, and like all movements of this kind it has its various factions, some of whom are more committed to demonstrating the steadfastness of their Christian faith than to exercising political influence. To some degree, too, the secular temper of the business community—not densely populated by Bible-reading types—has a powerful grip on the Republican political imagination, as well as on its finances. It is even possible that Christian conservatism will fragment into new political parties. The conventional political wisdom, wedded to our two-party system, would assume that this would mark the political demise of Christian conservatism. That is possible. But it is also possible that the two-party system, however deeply rooted in our history, is not going to be with us forever.

In any case, I think it is probably an error to focus so narrowly on the role of Christian conservatism in American politics. The born-again Christian impulse is, above all, a religious impulse that looks well beyond any political horizon. It is my sense that this impulse will grow in the years ahead, whatever the political fortunes or misfortunes of Christian political conservatism. We have lived through a century of ever more extreme hedonism, antinomianism, personal and sexual individualism, licentiousness (as it used to be called), and no one who has bothered to read a bit of history ought to be surprised if it culminates in some kind of aggressive reli-

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gious awakening. So the rise of Christian political conservatism may turn out to be a prelude to something far more important, involving the place of religion in American life, including American public life. Just what form this renewed religious impulse will take no one can foresee. We—all of us—could be in for some shocking surprises.

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Individualism before multiculturalism

GLENN C. LOURY

SINCE the Founding, America has struggled to incorporate the descendants of African slaves into an estate of full and equal citizenship. One hundred thirty-two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, this process, though well advanced, remains incomplete, and we must now consider whether, and how, further progress can be made. But we must first decide who "we" are.

Who *we* are depends on who's talking and to whom. In our society, public race talk is part of the larger political conversation concerning national affairs. But there is private race talk too—that conversation among segregated confidants who speak with a candor not possible in public. Civil rights, affirmative action, multicultural education, and voting-rights policy are discussed publicly in explicitly racial terms while the implicit racial themes of crime and welfare simmer beneath the

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surface of public conversation. Race talk has always dominated communal deliberations among blacks as we have sought, through heated internal dialogue, to come to terms with the inherited disability of second-class citizenship. I am sure that whites too engage in lively, if guarded, private deliberations on race-related matters.

Modes of race talk

These two levels of deliberation—public within the national polity, and private amongst blacks and whites themselves—interact in important and complex ways. What is acceptable and effective to argue in either forum depends on the nature of the discourse in the other. Prudent discussion of racial matters must attend to these interrelated contexts. So, I am engaged here in two connected, but distinct, conversations, practicing a kind of "double speak," if you will. On the one hand, I speak as a public man, an American, to the whole nation, offering advice on how "we"—that is, all of us—should approach questions of race. But, I also speak as a black, addressing "my people" about how "we" should endeavor to make progress.

This dual role limits what I can say without risk of misunderstanding by one or another audience. Both audiences may extend to me a certain license because of race but, for the same reason, may also demand a certain fealty: Each listener will search for evidence of disloyalty to cherished values and for confirmation of strongly held convictions. Inevitably, some of you must be disappointed.

As a veteran of the academic culture wars during a period of growing racial conflict in our society, I have often had to confront the problem of balancing my desire to fulfill the expectations of others—both whites and blacks, but, more especially, blacks—with my conviction that one should live with integrity. Sometimes this has led me to act against my initial inclination in ways which would elicit approval from my racial peers. After many years, however, I came to understand that, unless I were willing to risk the derision of the crowd, I would have no chance to discover the most important truths about myself or about life—to define and pursue that which I most value, to make the unique contribution to my family and

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community as God would have me do. (The stakes are now too high for any of us to do otherwise.)

This small private truth points toward some larger social truths: that the seductive call of the tribe can be a siren's call; that there are no group goals or purposes existing prior to, and independently of, the life plans and the ideals of individual persons; that, unless individualism is truly exalted, multiculturalism descends into crass ethnic cheerleading; that, after all is said and done, race is an epiphenomenon, even here in America, even for the descendants of slaves.

Race talk like this is heresy for those I call racialists. Racialists hold to the doctrine that "authentic" blacks must view themselves as objects of mistreatment by whites and share in a collective consciousness of that mistreatment with other blacks. Believers of this creed have shaped the broad public discussion of racial affairs in America for decades; they have also policed, and therefore stifled, black communal discourse. They have argued, in effect, that the fellow feeling amongst blacks, engendered by our common experience of racism, should serve as the basis for our personal identities. Only if whites fully acknowledge their racist culpability, the racialists insist, can the black condition improve. In this they have been monumentally, tragically wrong. They have sacrificed, on an altar of racial protest, the unlimited potential of countless black lives. These are strong statements, but I regard them as commensurate with the crimes.

The ineluctable truth of the matter is that the most important challenges and opportunities confronting any person arise not from his racial condition but from our common human condition. Group membership alone tells us nothing that is true about how we should live. The social contingencies of race, gender, class, or sexual orientation are the raw materials from which an individual constructs a life. The life project is what brings about the development and expression of an individual's personality. Whatever our race, class, or ethnicity, we must all devise and fulfill a life plan. By facing and solving this problem, we grow as human beings and give meaning and substance to our lives.

Because we share this problem—identical in essentials, different only in details—we can transcend racial difference, gain

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a genuine mutual understanding of our respective experiences and travails, and empathize with one another. As Sartre might have said, Because we all confront the existential challenge of discovering how to live in "good faith," we are able to share love across the tribal boundaries.

From the inside out

Ironically, to the extent that we individual blacks see ourselves primarily through a racial lens, we sacrifice several possibilities for the kind of personal development that would ultimately further our collective racial interests. For, if we continue to labor under a self-definition derived from the outlook of our putative oppressor and confined to the contingent facts of our oppression, we shall never be truly free men and women.

The greatest literature of ethnic writers begins from this truth. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce says of Irish nationalism:

> When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by these nets.... Do you know what Ireland is?... Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow.

Just as Irish nationalism stultified Stephen Dedalus of *A Portrait*, so too has the racialist emphasis on a mythic, authentic blackness worked to hold back the souls of young blacks from flight into the open skies of American society.

Toward the end of chapter 16 of *Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison's hero recalls a lecture on Joyce that he heard while in college at Tuskegee, Alabama, in which the teacher argues:

> [Joyce's] problem, like ours, was not actually one of creating the uncreated conscience of his race, but of creating the uncreated features of his face. Our task is that of making ourselves individuals.... We create the race by creating ourselves and then to our great astonishment we will have created a culture. Why waste time creating a conscience for something which doesn't exist? For you see, blood and skin do not think![1]

[1] Further on in this passage the hero concludes: "For the first time, lying there in the dark, I could glimpse the possibility of being more than a member of a race. It was no dream, the possibility existed. I had only to work and learn and survive in order to go to the top."

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This is precisely the point. Ellison understood it. A later generation of black writers have refused to see it: Skin and blood do not think. The "conscience of the race" must be constructed from the inside out, one person at a time. If this is a social truth, it has important consequences for political life and discourse in contemporary America.

My colleague Charles Griswold has nicely captured the impossibility of discourse in a society that is dominated by mutually insulated groups—those who define themselves by race, from the outside in. In a recent, essay he writes:

> One frequently hears people declare, with passion: "speaking as an [X] I can inform you that [Y]," where "X" is the name of the relevant group and "Y" stands for some description or evaluation of the condition or beliefs of X. An auditor not in group X cannot speak with any authority about that group; one must and usually does defer immediately. The moral authority embodied in statements preceded by "Speaking as an [X]" stems in part from an epistemic thesis to the effect that the point of view shared by all members of X is not accessible, or at least not sufficiently accessible, to non-X persons.

Griswold is interested in the paradox of these mutually insulated groups, neither capable of understanding the other, who nevertheless insist upon equal group recognition. This is an apt description of the current state of American pluralism. But we must ask whether recognition can reasonably be demanded when understanding is denied to the outsider? How can genuine respect arise from mutual ignorance? How can the white, who has "no idea of what black people have endured in this country," really honor the accomplishments of blacks who have transcended the barriers of racial constraint? How can a black, who could "never see things the way the white man does," ever hope to persuade the "white man" to meet him halfway on a matter of mutual importance?

It would appear that empathy and persuasion across racial lines are impossible unless an understanding obtains that the conditions and feelings of particular human beings are universally shared. Such an understanding can be had, but only if we look past race to our common humanity. This implies that the problems facing poor, black Americans should not be presented as narrow racial claims but should be conveyed to the

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rest of the polity in their essential human terms.

From this perspective, the racialist's assertion of epistemic privilege is more than a philosophic stance. In our pluralistic democracy, it leads, as Griswold notes, "to the destruction of any notion of community except as the arena within which war is waged for recognition, and for the political and economic benefits which follow from recognition."

A politics of despair

Black-white relations are actually far worse than Charles Griswold's assessment would suggest. Racialists have waged a "war for recognition" under the banner of black victimization for the past 20-some years. This war has now ended with a plaintive demand to be patronized. In a stunning attempt at political jujitsu, the voices of black authenticity insist that the very helplessness of their group gives evidence of whites' culpability, to which the only fit response is the recognition of black claims. This is a politics of despair, especially after the 1994 elections that illustrated that other white responses are possible. The racialist strategy has proved disastrous.

Consider the issue of affirmative action. Advocates of blacks' interests are now reduced to insisting that affirmative action is just and necessary because, without the use of special criteria for selection, the numbers of blacks in various important institutions of the society would be unbearably low. This argument is rooted in desperation.

The backlash against race-conscious policies continues to grow. Survey researchers Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza found in a recent study that "merely [mentioning] the issue of affirmative action [to whites] increases significantly the likelihood that they will perceive blacks as irresponsible." In the 1994 elections, white men voted in favor of Republican Congressional candidates over Democrats by a margin of 63 percent to 37 percent. This fact has many explanations, among which resentment of race- and gender-based preferences figures prominently. Claims of "reverse discrimination" by white men have long been treated by liberals as a mere annoyance or as reactionary expressions of distaste for the noble goal of "civil rights." These resentments can now be seen for what they really are—manifestations of the cost to the American

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polity of the reification of race. Ignored for a quarter of a century by those who make and administer our laws, these costs have now found their way into our political life, with unpredictable effects. For instance, a ballot initiative in California outlawing affirmative action may become the "Proposition 187" of the 1996 campaign. Can anyone doubt that it will attract considerable electoral support?

One consequence of all this is that the black poor are especially vulnerable politically. Democrats all, racialist black leaders of inner-city communities have cast their lot with those seeking to expand the welfare state, increase taxes, and promulgate more regulations. Blacks reliably provide one-fourth of the Democratic votes in presidential contests. Black congressional representation is significantly dependent on districts that have been gerrymandered so as to assure that ultra-liberal black candidates are elected without the inconvenience of having to persuade any whites to support them.[2]

This political dependence on the Left has persisted despite the rightward political drift of the nation, ongoing for the last generation, and notwithstanding the cultural conservatism of a deeply religious black-American population. These leaders have struck an alliance with feminists, gay activists, and civil libertarians, while building few bridges to center-right political organizations. It is now obvious that a conservative political

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[2] Political reporter Juan Williams has concluded that the Republican sweep of Congress in the 1994 elections "pushed black America into a corner.... The Congressional Black Caucus is politically impotent, its members stripped of key committee chairmanships and their voices weakened in the diminished choir of Democrats.... The most influential black American in government today is Republican-appointed Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas."

Justice Thomas had warned of these difficulties. Yet he was widely denounced by black politicians for his passionate opinion in *Holder v. Hall*, the voting rights case handed down in June 1994. Thomas, criticizing the Court's voting-rights jurisprudence to date, declared: "we have devised a remedial mechanism that encourages federal courts to segregate voters into racially designated districts to ensure minority electoral success. In doing so we have collaborated in what may aptly be termed the racial 'balkanization' of the Nation."

Thomas's concerns deserve more serious consideration than they have yet received. Because racial gerrymandering concentrates black voters in a relatively few districts, it actually makes it easier for conservative candidates to prevail in the many districts not set aside for black politicians. According to Juan Williams, "redistricting brought eight new black seats to Congress from Alabama, Georgia, Florida and North Carolina. But it has also meant that 15 more Republican seats have been added from those states."

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majority can be constructed in this country, and that it can govern without the support of urban minority voters.

Poisoning democracy

The paradigm of racial accountancy has, of course, spread beyond politics, with deleterious effects. In *The Bell Curve*, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray point to a large gap in the average IQ scores between blacks and whites, suggesting that much of this difference is determined by genetic factors. The authors have received perhaps unwarranted criticism for simply stating the fact that, on the average, blacks lag behind whites in cognitive functioning. They certainly deserve criticism for implying, as they do, that we should accommodate ourselves to this difference in mental performance between the races and to the consequent social inequality. Yet Herrnstein and Murray can claim, with cause, that they are merely responding to the *Zeitgeist*: Their psychometrician's brew is expressed in the terms of racial groupings previously anointed by the advocates of social equity. They are saying, in effect, "Counting by race wasn't our idea; but since you've mentioned it, let's look at *all* of the numbers!"

Black American economic and educational achievement in the post-civil-rights era has certainly been ambiguous—great success mixed with shocking failure. The loudest voices among black activists have tried to bluff their way past this ambiguous record by cajoling and chastising anyone who expresses disappointment or dismay. (For instance, on the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, campus, it is now considered a racist act to observe publicly that black basketball players are flunking their academic courses.) These activists treat low black achievement as an automatic indictment of the American social order rather than a revelation of black inadequacies. They are hoist with their own petard by the arguments and data of *The Bell Curve*. Having insisted on the primacy of the racial lens, they must now confront the specter of a racial intelligence accountancy, which offers a rather different explanation for the ambiguous achievements of blacks in the last generation.

So the question now for blacks, as well as for whites, is whether, given equal opportunity, blacks are capable of gain-

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ing equal status. It is a peculiar mind that fails, in light of American history, to fathom how poisonous a question this is for our democracy. Let me state my unequivocal belief that blacks are, indeed, so capable. Still, any such assertion is a hypothesis or an axiom, not a fact. The fact is that we blacks have something to prove, to ourselves and to what W.E.B. Du Bois once called "a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity." This is not fair; it is not right; but it is the way things are.

Some conservatives have signaled their belief that blacks can never pass this test. Some black radicals agree. Increasingly and with greater openness, they argue that blacks cannot make it in "white America" and, so, should stop trying and that blacks should go their own way, burning a few things down in the process. At bottom, these parties share the view that blacks cannot meet the challenge.

Yet the challenge confronting blacks today is not racial at all. It is primarily the human condition, not our racial conditions, with which we must *all* learn to cope. What Paul wrote to the Corinthians many centuries ago remains true: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man; but God is faithful, He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your ability, but when you are tempted He will provide a way out so that you can bear it." The Greek word for "temptation" here can also be translated as "trial" or "test." If indeed blacks must now endure under the weight of a great human trial, still, God remains faithful. We can either confront and dispel our difficulties or deny and avoid them. That we can and must meet this challenge makes the core of Herrnstein and Murray's race talk spectacularly unhelpful. What they are actually saying is that success is unlikely given blacks' average mental equipment, but never mind, because cognitive ability is not the only currency for measuring human worth. Yet this is where viewing people first as members of racial groups must lead. This is the inevitable fruit of racialism.

Whatever the merits and demerits of IQ tests, the scores need not be bandied about in aggregate terms of race. If low intelligence is a problem, then changing the racial identities of those at the top and bottom of the IQ scale does not solve it. Similarly, the crime problem in our society has nothing to

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do with the skin colors of the perpetrators and victims. It is a great—if common—moral and political error to advance the view that a person's race is his most important characteristic. Portraying a handful of vicious criminals—who happen to be black, and who prey disproportionately upon other blacks—as themselves victims is an egregious act of racialist propaganda. The result is not to engender sympathy in the minds of whites but instead to foster fear of, and contempt for, the communities from which these criminals have been advertised to have come. Smugly confident of their moral superiority in pursuit of "racial justice" for death-row inmates, the racialists are unable to see how shrill and hysterical their claims sound to the average American.

Toward the unum

How can we begin to overcome the fragmentation of the "unum" that is the result of racialist politics? I propose that we suppress, as much as possible, the explicit use of racial categories in the conduct of public affairs. This will, of course, not erase ethnic identity as an important factor in the society; but a conscious effort to achieve a humanistic, universal public policy and rhetoric would redound to the social, political, and psychological benefit of underprivileged minorities in America. Racialists, of course, will dispute this. Stubborn economic inequality between groups, they will argue, gives the lie to the ideal of "E pluribus unum." But why should we care about group inequality, *per se*? Why not focus on inequality among individual persons, and leave it at that?

The preoccupation with group inequality is usually defended on the grounds that group disparities reveal the oppression of individuals based on their group identity. This rationale is ultimately unconvincing. As Thomas Sowell has shown, the Chinese in Southeast Asia, the Indians in East Africa, and the Jews in Western Europe are groups that, though subjected to oppression, have economically surpassed their oppressors. The lesson of history is not that—absent oppression—all relevant social aggregates must reap roughly equal economic rewards. Indeed, that view ignores the economic relevance of historically determined and culturally reinforced beliefs, values, interests, and attitudes that define ethnic groups. "Historically

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specific cultures," political theorist Michael Walzer has observed, "necessarily produce historically specific patterns of interest and work."

Nor can we claim that the very existence of distinct beliefs, values, and interests among groups proves oppression. In effect, this is to argue that, but for historical oppression, all groups would be the same along every dimension associated with economic success. Yet, if group differences in beliefs, values, and interests bearing on economic achievement are the fruit of oppression, then so are those differences in group styles celebrated by the cultural pluralists. To put the matter simply by way of a concrete example: If poor academic performance among black students reflects "oppression," then does not outstanding athletic or artistic performance spring from the same source? No. Obviously, the existence of group disparities is not a moral problem *ipso facto*. In any case, to the extent that inequality *is* a problem, it can be dealt with adequately without invoking group categories. American society has for 30 years pursued government, corporate, and academic policies as if the necessity of using racial categories were a Jeffersonian self-evident truth. The great costs to our sense of national unity arising from this fallacious course are now becoming evident.

Martin Luther King, Jr., is justly famous for his evocation of national unity in his 1963 speech "I Have a Dream," in which he said: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Today, it is mainly conservatives who recall King's dream. And to evoke, with any passion, King's color-blind ideal is, in some quarters, to show a limited commitment to racial justice. In the face of formal equality of opportunity, liberals cling to race-conscious public action as the only remedy to the persistence of racial inequality. How deeply ironic that a vigorous defense of the color-blind ideal is regarded by the liberal mind as an attack on blacks.[3] I submit, to the contrary, that

[3] Lest this appear an exaggeration, consider the following: In her 1984 book *A New American Dilemma*, political scientist Jennifer Hochschild argues that the unwillingness of American courts and legislatures to override popular, democratically expressed opposition to massive, cross-district busing for school

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establishing the color-blind principle is the *only* way to secure lasting civic equality for the descendants of slaves.

Honor and identity

In his 1982 study *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson rejects a property-in-people conception of slavery. Instead, he defines slavery as the "permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons." The novelty of this definition lies in its emphasis on the systematic *dishonoring* of enslaved persons. Patterson argues that hierarchical symbolic relations of respect and standing between masters and slaves are the distinguishing features of the institution of slavery. He finds it a common feature of slavery that masters parasitically derive honor from their power over slaves, while slaves are marginalized by virtue of having no social existence except that mediated by their masters.

Patterson's insight into the nature of slavery implies that emancipation—the legal termination of the masters' property claims—cannot by itself possibly suffice to make genuinely equal citizens of slaves (or of their descendants). The freedman must also overcome a historically generated and culturally reinforced "lack of honor"—a matter that formal legal resolutions alone cannot dispel. How are the deeply entrenched presumptions of inferiority, of intellectual and moral inadequacy, to be extinguished? How are the doubts of former masters and the self-doubts of former slaves to be transcended?

This "problem of honor" is a tenacious ideological remnant of our origins as a slave society. It must be faced if we are to live up to the ideal of "E pluribus unum." Securing the respect of whites and enhancing self-respect have been central themes in black American history. The late historian Nathan Huggins clarified the matter by noting that blacks, unlike the various American immigrant groups, are not an *alien* popula-

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desegregation exposes our nation's limited commitment to the ideal of equal opportunity. In his 1993 bestseller *Race Matters*, noted black scholar Cornel West asserts: "visible Jewish resistance to affirmative action and government spending on social programs" is an assault "on black livelihood." In a similar spirit, black Congressman Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) made headlines during the 1994 campaign when he alleged that Republicans' advocacy of tax cuts was racist in motivation.

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tion in this society but an *alienated* one—an essentially indigenous people who, by birthright, are entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizenship. The political history of black Americans may be instructively viewed as the struggle to secure an acknowledgment of this birthright claim. Our goal has always been to belong to the "unum." Despite various separatist movements, the wisest African Americans have known that inclusion is the only way.

But this pursuit of freedom and inclusion is a very hard road. Booker T. Washington understood that blacks would have to confront the "problem of honor" and its demands in their efforts to achieve true emancipation. Washington argued:

> It is a mistake to assume that the Negro, who had been a slave for two hundred and fifty years, gained his freedom by the signing, on a certain date, of a certain paper by the President of the United States. It is a mistake to assume that one man can, in any true sense, give freedom to another. Freedom, in the larger and higher sense every man must gain for himself.

Washington also knew that progress for blacks in our democracy depended upon being sensitive to the concerns of whites. Indeed, every black leader of any influence has worked within such a context. Only in our time has the notion been advanced that "authentic" black leadership should be unencumbered by the need to consider white opinion. Only in our time, to repeat, are electoral districts drawn so that blacks may be elected without the inconvenience of winning white votes.

Persuasion or extortion?

The old civil-rights activism sought to persuade; the new activism seeks to extort. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his followers protested vigorously on behalf of clear principles of social justice. Their use of nonviolent civil disobedience drew forth the affirmation of common principles from their fellow citizens. Their reliance on the humanity and decency of the American majority shows respect for the moral integrity of their fellows. King was thus, rightly, a leader of both black and white Americans. His stature in each community depended upon his influence in the other. The dramatic public confron-

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tations he and others in the movement engineered were closely followed by white and black audiences—each aware that the other was watching. The morally persuasive nature of King's appeal mobilized the conscience of the white majority. By doing so, he also convinced many blacks that there was realistic hope, at long last, that their essential interests would be accommodated. King thus confronted the most critical task of any leader who seeks to promote racial harmony in our divided society: to assure the good people of each race that their counterparts on the other side do, in fact, exist.

That so many young blacks see in Malcolm X and Martin Luther King a legitimate polarity of philosophic alternatives is a telling commentary on the moral confusion of today's orthodoxy. Malcolm X is an exceptionally poor guide, especially concerning blacks and the American Unum, since the interests of blacks, properly understood, are inescapably intertwined with the concerns and sensibilities of whites. But it is to the radicalism of Malcolm X that the Afrocentrist rejectionist rabble-rousers, like Al Sharpton, look for inspiration. And it is precisely because the civil-rights establishment has itself lost sight of the need to take whites' fears and revulsions seriously that it falls mute in the wake of the excesses of Sharpton, Jeffries, Farrakhan, et al., who, rather than persuade on the basis of a common humanity, issue demands from their racial bunkers.

We can see the consequences of this racial insularity in Crown Heights, New York. Murderous mobs of black youth rampaged, openly incited by Sharpton and others who then claimed status and prestige for themselves as brokers of the peace. Leaders like Sharpton have emerged because more respectable black advocates have abandoned that cardinal principle that Booker T. Washington understood so well. The dominant message of these leaders is that blacks have abjured persuasion, hold white opinion in contempt, and seek to frighten and extort. Such "leadership" apparently intends to ensure that bad people of both races will find each other, the better to keep conflict alive.

The truth is that whites do not need to be shown how to *fear* black youths in the cities; instead, they must be taught how to *respect* them. This means that effective, persuasive

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black leadership must show whites a disciplined, respectable black demeanor. That such comportment is consistent with protest for redress of grievance is a great legacy of the civil-rights movement. But more than disciplined protest is necessary. Discipline, orderliness, and virtue *in every aspect of life* will contribute to the goal of creating an aura of respectability and worth. Such an aura is a valuable political asset and the natural by-product of living one's life in a dignified, civilized manner.

Character counts

Because racial oppression tangibly diminishes its victims, in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, the construction of new public identities and the simultaneous promotion of self-respect are crucial tasks facing those burdened with a history of oppression. Without virtuous character and public citizenship, there can be no genuine recovery from past victimization. But, thankfully, overcoming the accumulated disadvantages of past victimization is not an experience unique to black Americans. It's *not* just "a black thing, which you wouldn't understand."

A prominent civil-rights leader teaches young blacks the exhortation: "I *am* somebody." True enough, but the crucial question then becomes: "Just *who* are you?" The black youngster should be prepared to respond: "Because I *am* somebody, I will not accept unequal rights. Because I *am* somebody, I will waste no opportunity to better myself. Because I *am* somebody, I will respect my body by not polluting it with drugs or promiscuous sex. Because I *am* somebody—in my home, in my community, in my nation—I will comport myself responsibly, I will be accountable, I will be available to serve others as well as myself." It is the doing of these fine things, not the saying of any fine words, that proves that here *is* somebody to be reckoned with. A youngster *is* somebody not because of the color of his skin but because of the content of his character.

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The Other America revisited

ROGER STARR

LET'S start with an old puzzle. Did Humpty-Dumpty remain seated on a perilous wall because he was naturally too stout to move elsewhere? Or did he remain seated there because society, unable to find anything for him to do, filled his belly until he finally lost his balance and was smashed to bits?

Either of these two possibilities applied to the underclass can be answered in the affirmative. One group of critics points to the personal shortcomings of the underclass; the other, to society's failure to employ the underclass usefully. Subject to economic tides and the winds of public discourse, either one of these explanations may temporarily gain ascendancy over policy making until, at length, and often after heavy costs, sour disappointments, and unintended side effects, it proves inadequate by itself to explain the problem of poverty.

Slightly more than 30 years ago, a slim volume called *The Other America* endorsed the second explanation of poverty—that the very existence of poverty in a nation of plenty could

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only be ascribed to misgovernment and the indifference or, worse, the connivance of a powerful elite. The book added the somewhat novel idea that widespread American poverty had failed to arouse the conscience of decent Americans mainly because contemporary poverty is relatively invisible as compared with the poverty of eras past. The double message was lifted from the book and widely disseminated over the American political landscape. Reprinted six times (with a new introduction added in 1971, of which more will be said), the book is still available in paperback. *The Other America* helped to change governmental social policy in ways that only recently have been scrutinized by mainstream legislators and candidates for executive office.

Harrington's humanism

The author, the late Michael Harrington, still in his early thirties when the book appeared, had lived for several years within a block of the Bowery, Manhattan's skid row. Harrington resided there as an affiliate of the Catholic Worker movement and as editor of its journal. Under the leadership of Dorothy Day, another compassionate and indignant proponent of "social change," the Catholic Worker movement sought, by immediate personal intervention, to alleviate the hardships of Manhattan's poor vagrants and to bring them to the nation's attention. The "culture of poverty," as described by Harrington, referred to the alleged state of permanent acceptance of defeat suffered by the poor in facing the private-enterprise system, which, according to Harrington, was skewed against them.

Harrington's major thesis in *The Other America* was that the culture of poverty holds its minions captive as helplessly as flies on flypaper. They can be freed only through the efforts of their fellow citizens to enact redemptive policies. Today, it seems somewhat mysterious that Americans, many in leadership positions, should have been persuaded that poverty envelops all who endure it in an unbreakable cultural cocoon. One of America's persistent morality tales is that presidents can come from the humblest of origins (though most did not) and that, while social classes, increasingly defined by money rather than land ownership, are long lasting, there is nevertheless considerable social mobility. Never was there a more

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massive movement of the less affluent into the economic middle than in the 17 years between the end of the Second World War and 1962, when *The Other America* appeared.

There were two reasons for the success of the book with those not simply on the non-communist left but also with political leaders in the centrist majority. One was that Harrington was a felicitous writer; the other that he was a humanist of unmistakable seriousness with deep personal commitment not to any specific political program but to exposing the "culture of poverty." The book emphasized the moral argument for eliminating poverty while hardly examining the economic significance and the unintended consequences of the implicit governmental expenditures that would necessarily be incurred in the course of ending what Harrington called the "outrage" of poverty.

Although widely praised by reviewers and adopted as sound doctrine by many governmental and civic leaders, the first edition also elicited some regretful and marginal doubts from critics who essentially sided with Harrington. Dwight Macdonald was one such critic—like Harrington, a Yale graduate and a free-thinking believer in change. In a long discussion of *The Other America* in the *New Yorker*, published in January 1963, Macdonald noted that, while statisticians tried to define precisely how many dollars of income a year constituted the boundary between painful poverty and some more blessed state of being, it was very hard to find a number that made more sense than any other. The full count of people allegedly in painful poverty in the United States was put by Harrington in his book at between 40 and 50 million. Such a figure was hard to defend or to attack, for if one could not define "painful poverty," it would be devilishly difficult to find out how many were experiencing it.

Macdonald's point—shared by other commentators—was that, while Harrington was not very adept at statistical analysis or, for that matter, at economics generally, his condemnation of the majority's indifference to the painful poverty of millions of their fellow citizens was a valid call to action from which all Americans would benefit.

What the author produced instead of solid statistics on poverty and income, and what surely helped win him a level

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of trust from his readers, was his tone of credible immediacy. He did not write of poor people in the mass, nor invent futuristic changes in human behavior to carry out his program. The poverty he wrote about was that of people he had seen at close range and listened to. In *The Other America*, he did not propose any revolutionary change in American institutions (although in other writings he praised writers, often British, who called for mighty changes like the socialization of major industries). Harrington advocated nothing more radical sounding than rallying trade unions, liberal thinkers from the major political parties, black leaders, poor farmers, women's groups, and average Americans, all to combine to defeat poverty. Together, he expected them to prod the federal government to offer new undefined "opportunities" to the hapless victims of the culture of poverty which would help them lift their spirits and break free from poverty. There was little that smacked of class antagonisms in his book, probably because Harrington assumed that all believers in American democracy shared his ethical values.

Timing is everything

Let us not imagine, however, that Harrington's manifest sincerity and his dedication to helping the poor, without exalting himself, would have sold *The Other America* to so many readers without the benefit of fortuitous timing. If there ever was a moment when a group of American leaders would support what Harrington advocated, called by Lyndon Johnson a year or two later the War on Poverty, 1962 was it.

One element that made Harrington's appeal timely was the sense among the American majority that their doubts about the nation's future had been dispelled. The doubts dated back, of course, to the Great Depression, which many Americans understood to have been ended not by the New Deal or by private industry but by war. It was war that revived what the Great Depression had destroyed: unlimited economic demand, fueled by a continuing expansion of the money supply. Everyone could find a job, whether or not he, and then increasingly she, could do it well. And yet, because it was war, government was able to control inflation, at least temporarily, by imposing rigorous ceilings on the prices of almost everything in the

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economy. Unions, which feared being labeled unpatriotic, kept their wage demands within the bounds of something called the Little Steel formula. The country met its wartime armament goals, which, when first articulated by President Roosevelt, had seemed wildly unreachable to most economists. America ended unemployment, put 11 million men and women in uniform, shifted working populations wherever they were needed, and, because of the imperative of national survival, avoided widespread resistance to an economy managed by Washington "bureaucrats."

Victory, following some initial disasters, gave many Americans the sense that their government could do anything. In tune with that confidence, Sunday newspapers encouraged their readers to look forward to a brilliant future in the peace to come after victory. Every family would indeed have a home, an automobile, an electronic device called a television, although not one set was yet a commercial reality. Every veteran of the armed forces would be able to afford a university education or, if he or she preferred, vocational training.

Of course, there were doubters who pointed out that the First World War was followed quickly by a sharp recession and that, within eight years of that 1921 dip, the United States was struck by the stock-market panic that began its deeper sequel. Learned adversaries continued to debate whether Keynesian economics would avert a repeat of the dismal 1930s, but, by the early 1960s, it seemed clear that the Sunday journalists had been right. The United States was the only industrial nation to have survived the Second World War with its manufacturing facilities intact.

For years after 1945, America's only serious economic problem was the inability of its traditional trading partners in Europe to pay for the goods they needed. To help its own industries, as well as to turn its enervated customers into avid and credit-worthy buyers, America devised the Marshall Plan (criticized in a book review by Harrington on the grounds that it selfishly forced beneficiaries to spend the money America gave them on American products). To sustain a free Berlin, the United States became the mainstay of an international airlift, demonstrating that airborne cargoes by themselves could keep Berlin's residents nourished, clothed, and economically

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and culturally alive for nearly a full year. By 1962, it was a truism repeated everywhere that the U.S. economy was so strong that it could do anything its managers wanted.

Government also showed undreamed of power when the racially segregated armed forces, in which whites and blacks had been automatically assigned to different units, were integrated by a presidential decree on the part of Harry S. Truman, hardly a revolutionary on social policy. The result demonstrated to many observers the ability of government to accomplish whatever it wanted not only in economics but even in the difficult area of relations between the races. By the 1960s, the Kennedy administration managed to give the country the impression that the White House could even stimulate the national interest in high, or at least modestly high, culture.

More to the point, within a few years of the publication of *The Other America*, Lyndon Johnson announced his program for the Great Society, a key element of which was the War on Poverty. The president turned that campaign over to Sargent Shriver who had probably read *The Other America*. He asked Harrington to come to Washington for a few weeks and join the planning group that was trying to formulate a program from the vast number of suggestions that poured in from well-meaning policy makers.

Given Harrington's manifest sympathy for the 40 to 50 million people he believed to be mired in poverty, Shriver's turn to him may have seemed constructive. However, *The Other America* was much stronger in its expressions of sympathy for the poor than in providing concrete suggestions for achieving the elimination of the culture of poverty. Nevertheless, the programs that ultimately emerged did carry out, in some measure, Harrington's commitment to ending poverty. They included free, or almost free, health care for the poor and elderly, massive civil-rights legislation, federally funded educational and vocational programs, new forms of federal housing subsidies, and Supplemental Security Income and enhanced Social Security benefits. Social Security, Harrington insisted, was the least satisfactory of these programs because its benefits were reserved for workers who contributed during their employment to its capital funds. Though he believed that labor unions were the most progressive institutions in American

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life, Harrington also thought that people who did not work, whatever the reason, were entitled to a guaranteed income that would cover their perceived needs.

Unbounded naiveté

The most realistic passages in Harrington's book were not the bounteous prescriptions he gave for governmental largesse but those that described poverty's victims: the abandoned elderly in the midst of the cities; black farmers in the South who could not compete with big, subsidized farming enterprises and who lived on the edge of invisible starvation from a grossly unbalanced diet; migrant agricultural workers and their families in the far West who worked long hours in the field for a mere pittance; former employees of companies like Packard Motor Cars and Armour who lost their jobs when their employers closed down; coal miners of Pennsylvania and Appalachia who, displaced from their jobs by modern mining techniques, watched their wives go to work in what Harrington called "fly-by-night" garment factories. Harrington was eloquent also in describing the pernicious prejudices that excluded many black Americans from gainful employment.

Surely many readers of *The Other America* reached the conclusion that he did: that it was more urgent to do something about poverty than to decide what should actually be done. Harrington advocated "planning" but left the planning process undefined, except with respect to federal housing programs and a few other items. On the housing problem, the author did offer some policy critiques and suggestions specific enough to be evaluated. They do not inspire confidence.

He told his readers that housing "must be seen as an important organism for the creation of community life in the cities." That admirable, though somewhat vague, proposal failed to take into account the requirement, established originally by the courts and later fortified by federal regulations, that poor families be admitted to public housing on the basis of their need, without considering any past history of destructive or criminal behavior. Although he characterized vividly the difficulty of dealing with the alcoholic vagrants he got to know on the Bowery, Harrington seemed never to have considered that some poor people may have personal habits that make them

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unwelcome even in a community of equals. He ignored the strain that disturbed families place on community spirit in the close quarters of an apartment house. One measure of the difficulty of creating communities in public housing is the ultimate dynamiting of federally aided housing projects from St. Louis to Newark because they had become uninhabitable as a result of tenant destructiveness and rent strikes.

Harrington quoted Charles L. Farris, who was at the time executive director of land clearance for the St. Louis Redevelopment Authority, as saying that low-cost and middle-income units should be interspersed, an idea shared by other housing specialists. Indeed, programs to accomplish this goal have been established by Washington, but their applicability is generally limited by the difficulty housing managers encounter in trying to commingle families of significantly different income levels. Unless the number of poor families is limited sharply and the housing site is extraordinarily attractive and thus costly, they must search hard to find middle-income families willing to pay a considerably higher rent for an apartment next to an identical apartment occupied by a poor family paying a much lower rent.

Harrington criticized housing programs on the grounds that, to make room for subsidized apartment houses for the poor, they destroy as much housing as they create. Yet he insisted on constructing housing in "existing and vital neighborhoods" where, it seems reasonable to assume, vacant land is nonexistent and demolition of existing structures inevitable. He also quoted Farris as recommending that no apartment house for the poor should have more than eight apartments in it "to avoid the creation of an impersonal, bureaucratic environment." It is not difficult to find the shattered remains of housing projects in Staten Island and Jersey City that were built within the eight-unit limit. The problem with the prescription is that the land cost of such a low-density development is relatively high per unit, making it necessary to locate the small project on low-cost, vacant land, hardly resembling the call for building in "existing and vital neighborhoods."

Curiously, in his discussion of why poverty has become so severe in an affluent, modern society, Harrington blamed some of the damage on a number of government and private initia-

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tives that were intended to benefit workers. He criticized "fringe benefits" in labor contracts, including especially pension provisions. While these might sound benign, Harrington claimed that they tend to chain workers to their jobs, leaving them without an alternative if the employer goes out of business. Implicit in this discussion is the notion that, to discourage the spread of poverty to new victims, employers ought not be allowed to go out of business.

In a large number of American families, both parents have joined the work force; this is viewed by many of both sexes as a victory over sex discrimination. Obviously, a wife's earnings raise family income above its previous level, and, since it reduces the possibility of poverty, one might expect an enemy of poverty to endorse it. Harrington, however, took the opposite point of view, arguing that the social cost in the "impoverishment of home life" may be greater than the benefit of the wife's earned income. How would he supplement the family income if the wife were somehow forced to stop working? His implicit answer, of course, was that the government give her the same amount of money as she would have earned by working.

Let them drink beer

With equal fervor, Harrington supported changes on the other side of the income ledger. He was a strong supporter of the idea of a legal minimum wage for every working person in the United States but also an opponent of the low level at which the minimum wage was then placed. He wanted it set considerably higher—equal to the level necessary to support a family at a comfortable level above poverty. He also suggested that the minimum wage should be more than compensation for working; what Harrington advocated was the replacement of the welfare system by a minimum government-guaranteed standard of living for every American, working or nonworking, male or female. For nonwhites, he appeared to endorse the suggestion that, whatever female-headed households could lawfully receive in welfare allotments, this was far too little to compensate for the mistreatment they had suffered before the civil-rights revolution.

In his review of Harrington, Dwight Macdonald, without

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accepting Harrington's dollar figure for the boundary of poverty, nevertheless agreed that every American should be guaranteed the right to an income large enough not only to enable his family to avoid poverty but to provide the master of the household with an occasional glass of beer. Macdonald may have felt that no self-respecting father would pay for a glass of beer with money from the family's government allowance unless the rules specifically authorized him to do so; but others, more familiar with what might be termed "real life," would not necessarily assume the existence of such self-restraint.

Macdonald ended with what amounted to an independent essay on the prospects of a guaranteed minimum income for all. He expected that the federal government could afford such an outlay. He reached this conclusion by estimating how many families would receive how much of an allowance, without including the overhead costs of operating so complex a system. Neither Macdonald nor Harrington considered the upward push that their universal income guarantees would exert on the wage levels of unionized workers and, consequently, on the price level of practically all goods and services in the economy. Macdonald insisted that the income supplements to the poor be paid for by new taxes rather than by government borrowing. He then suggested that the "extra expense" to the government of these disbursements would be offset by the "lift to the economy" produced by the increased purchasing power of the recipients. He did not seem to have considered that such an increase in purchasing power would tend to be offset by the increased taxes that he suggested must be imposed to pay for it.

Economic worries

In 1967, five years after *The Other America* was published, James Tobin, a former member of the Council of Economic Advisers and a future Nobel Prize winner in economics, wrote in the *New Republic* an essay entitled "It Can Be Done." Its point was that poverty in the United States could be eliminated within 10 years. Tobin wrote that the primary contribution to the elimination of poverty in the United States would come from the continuation of national economic growth. Growth, after all, requires not only increased consumer spend-

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ing but savings, innovation, risk-taking investments, and the apparent potential of future profit. Any social programs that might discourage any of these essentials must be regarded with suspicion. That Tobin had to express his hope for continued economic growth suggested that it could no longer be taken as a certainty. His words were probably intended to contain a cautionary hint against devising a political program to end poverty that might unintentionally obstruct the nation's economic growth, the mainspring of any serious effort to reduce poverty.

Harrington's view had, on the contrary, taken the nation's economic growth as a given. *The Other America* argued that a new political design for distributing the benefits of growth would be sufficient to provide the government with the surpluses needed to end poverty. His view had been encapsulated in a paragraph on the final page of *The Other America*: "What is needed if poverty is to be abolished is a return of political debate, a restructuring of the party system so that there can be clear choices, a new mood of social idealism." These words remained unchanged in the revised edition that came out in 1971.

The contrast between the two views, Tobin's and Harrington's, marks, with some precision, the change that had taken place during those five years in what might be called the confidence level of Americans. From its high point after the end of the Second World War, it faltered in the mid-1960s and dropped rapidly through the 1970s. The roster of disappointments is familiar. The assassination of President Kennedy was one political cause of increasing doubt; so were the urban riots, the mounting death toll of the Vietnam War, Watergate, and, somewhat later, President Nixon's resignation.

On the economic front, doubts began to rise as well. The national government could not balance its budget; year after year the deficit mounted, imposing an increasingly heavy interest burden on the national budget. The world economy in which the United States had been the supreme economic power was beginning to improve. Japan, long thought of by pre-Pearl Harbor Americans as the volcano of the shoddy, emerged as a very strong, efficient, and tough manufacturing competitor, even in fields like the production of automobiles and earth-

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moving machinery in which the United States had been preeminent.

Of greater immediate relevance to the parts of the manufacturing economy that employed workers at what Harrington classified as poverty wages in "fly-by-night" factories was the spread of the sewing machine and accessory devices, first in European countries with wage rates significantly lower than those found in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and ultimately in what had been the underdeveloped Third World. Dwindling employment in the American garment trades was thus particularly damaging to the very people whom Harrington had intended to help: low-income, unionized workers.

He seemed not to have comprehended that significantly raising the minimum wage was likely to force cutbacks in employment and hasten the replacement of workers with machinery. Loss of jobs means a loss in the market value of labor. The movement of sewing machines abroad was accompanied by the return of quasi-primitive conditions in surviving garment manufacturing enterprises. Even today, factory inspectors in New York's "niche" garment factories—located in ancient loft buildings and sometimes in the cellars of apartment houses—remain reluctant to enforce minimum-wage and safety regulations, even in the very neighborhood of the 1912 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in which 146 female workers were killed (a historic event still alive in urban memories). The inspectors fear that enforcing the regulations would simply throw desperate people, now mostly Asian immigrants, out of work.

Today some industries, like electronics, computer software, and aircraft manufacturing, continue to grow in the United States, but the general balance of trade remains unfavorable. Competition from abroad has forced companies to trim their labor forces; job growth is generally restricted to new, highly technological enterprises and to service occupations, which tend to pay lower wages than manufacturing industries while requiring fewer skills. Meanwhile, the job-training activities of the federal government have been limited by the fact that no one could promise enrollees employment upon graduation. During the 1970s, Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which gave money to

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state and municipal governments to hire unemployed people, theoretically to give them training in office and maintenance work. In fact, many of the men and women hired under the CETA program were simply former civil servants who had lost their jobs as local governments found themselves in budgetary trouble.

Perhaps the simplest clue to the real state of today's economy is that people tell pollsters that they no longer believe what they were raised to believe—that the next generation will have a higher standard of living than their parents.

Moral revolution

These economic changes undermined Harrington's claim that raising the living standards of what he called "the other America" could be a political priority acceptable to a majority of the nation. Yet economic uncertainty was not the main reason why the American people rejected Harrington's program. A large part of the nation (perhaps a majority) no longer believed the fundamental premise of Harrington's analysis of poverty; namely, that poverty is never the fault of those who suffer from it.

That Harrington himself noticed this shift in American attitudes—and was embittered by it—was evident from the new introduction that was added to the 1971 edition of *The Other America*. While the text of the main body of the book was not significantly changed, a new point of view appeared in the introduction. The text of *The Other America* was an appeal to the conscience of Americans to end poverty because it constituted an "outrage," victimizing the poor and keeping them captives of the culture of poverty. The new introduction suggested that the American government can no longer be trusted to follow its conscience. He summed it up in a paragraph describing a 1964 meeting on the Berkeley campus of the University of California:

> A large audience of students was enthusiastic when I talked of the Johnson program. These were the same young men and women who, within a matter of two or three years, were to become bitterly opposed to the President and who, in 1968, would help to drive him out of politics. And one of the reasons for their

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militant disenchantment would be, precisely, that they trusted in the promises made in 1964.

This description, ostensibly of the mind-set of the students, actually described Harrington's own perspective. It was primarily he who was disappointed by the failure of his appeal to conscience. What he would now substitute for it was an appeal to self-interest. He argued, in effect, that laissez-faire capitalism had made such a mess of the natural, as well as the built, environment of the nation that a major restructuring of the United States was required. At the center of the restructuring was the War on Poverty, which will, he now asserted, not only help the poor but help everyone else as well. Thus, he concluded his introduction with these words: "if we solve the problem of the other America, we will have learned how to solve the problems of all of America." The basis for this leap into the dark remains obscure.

The compassion that Harrington could summon to help the poor in an era of national self-confidence was no longer available. While the American majority regarded the poor with sympathy in good times, it found ample reason to feel differently as its confidence in the American future dwindled. The majority's sense that the world had changed was based not only on economic and political changes but on what had become an all-too-familiar roster of American disorders: crime, illegitimacy, family breakdown and violence, gender and ethnic politics, widespread addiction to illegal drugs, violence in the schools, the rise of armed splinter groups and cults that by any standard appear fanatical, and, not least, the political corruption of higher education.

At the same time, people who would have hesitated to express themselves 20 years earlier were no longer silent. They forcefully argued that there were many in poverty who got there because they were, for one reason or another, unwilling to work or incapable of working and found the welfare system at least as rewarding financially as working, especially if they, or members of their immediate household, were also active in the underground economy. Harrington's suggestion in 1962 that to eliminate poverty the nation must offer "real opportunities to these people, by changing the social reality that gives

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rise to their sense of hopelessness" is unlikely to resonate with today's reader.

Anyone who dares offer a cure for poverty in America in these more difficult days would have to start with James Tobin's first premise: Do nothing that might inhibit a growing economy. Next, the cure would have to start by dismissing the proposition that the poor are a homogenous mass: They can be separated into classes, some of which are more easily than others integrated into the working society. Instead of shadowboxing against the vague notion of the "culture of poverty," a sensible program would concentrate on training or retraining those who can be helped and on rescuing children from households beyond help. It is not realistic to believe that the urban or the natural landscape, however beautiful, or architecture, however brilliantly planned, can cure addiction or wife beating. A serious antipoverty program would encourage unemployed people in the older cities to move to places where they have a better chance to find work.

Above all else, an antipoverty planner should examine the unexpected implications of compassion, lest, by increasing the income of the unproductive poor, he stimulates a compensating rise in the cost of productive labor, thereby wiping out purchasing power and stunting the growth of the economy.

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The partial restoration of traditional society

CHARLES MURRAY

DURING work on *The Bell Curve*, Richard Herrnstein and I were struck by the way in which the 1950s saw portentous developments that no one noticed at the time. We were focusing especially on the transformation in the top universities, which converted in a few years from institutions for a socioeconomic elite to ones for a cognitive elite. But the observation could be applied broadly. Many of the intellectual and social trends that transformed society in the 1960s were coalescing in the 1950s. Yet a social scientist of the 1950s would have been hard put to predict the magnitude or velocity of the changes that were about to occur by looking at the standard quantitative indicators.

I think something similar is happening now. For the 30 years of *The Public Interest*, we have seen trends in the culture that most of the contributors to *The Public Interest*, including me, lament. But my impression is that, even though we may not see it in the statistical trendlines for some years to come, the pendulum of the last 30 years has passed the

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extremity of its arc, is already swinging the other way, and will continue to swing for many years, tracing changes just as sweeping in the next three decades as the liberal revolution produced in the last three.

Here the metaphor of a pendulum breaks down, however, because "the other way" will not necessarily be the reverse of the same arc. I am confident that we are about to witness a restoration of a culture that traditionalists will applaud, but not confident at all that the restored culture will embrace the whole nation as it once did.[1] For there is also bad news, as I have discussed elsewhere, suggesting that deterioration in family and cultural life is likely to continue in the underclass, and that the size of the underclass will grow, swelled by whites. But I have written about bad news more than enough. Let me use this thirtieth-anniversary celebration as an opportunity to dwell on the reasons why at least some of the news may be good.

The signs are good for a broad spectrum of Americans outside the underclass, but here I will be focusing on the new upper class that has been forming in recent years and has in the last year acquired a label: the overclass. The overclass differs from the old upper class in that it is larger (the proportion of Americans who can be considered wealthy has increased vastly since mid century), is little dependent on social background or inherited wealth, highly dependent on talent, and has much broader influence over the institutions of American life than the old, socially based upper class did. The overclass overlaps largely with what Herrnstein and I described in *The Bell Curve* as the "cognitive elite." It is characterized by high education, professional and managerial occupations, and career success within those occupations. It includes members of all races, but it is overwhelmingly white. Think of it as corresponding roughly to the top 5 to 10 percent of the income distribution.

[1] I have made a similar argument in these pages with regard to Britain ("The Next British Revolution," Number 118, Winter 1995). A still more ambitious hypothesis is that an Aristotelian counterrevolution is gathering among upper classes throughout the Western world.

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Sex among the cognitive elite

The first point to be made is that, for people in the top socioeconomic segment of white American society, social and cultural life never got so awful anyway. A few months ago, I met with 18 undergraduates from Colgate who were visiting Washington. We were discussing welfare when one of the young women in the group raised an objection. Why was I so critical of welfare as a cause of illegitimacy, she asked, when family breakdown is so widespread across social classes?

I asked for a show of hands of those who had spent their entire lives in a home headed by married biological parents. I expected the solid majority that would make my point. I did not expect that everybody's hand would go up except for that of the girl who asked the question—17 out of 18. Worried that I might have embarrassed her, I made a joke about the unpredictability of small samples.

After the seminar, I went to the most recent Bureau of the Census publication on living arrangements of children and looked up the numbers for young people like my white, upper-middle-class Colgate sample. It turned out that in 1993, 91 percent of all white children under 18 who had been born to college graduates were still living with both parents.[2] This doesn't mean divorce is not a problem for well-educated whites—an unknown percentage of that 91 percent include a stepparent—but I would not have guessed beforehand that anything close to 91 percent of such children under 18 would be living with two parents, biological or step.

On another measure of family breakdown, illegitimacy, the news is unambiguously good for this same well-educated white group. Here, we may turn to the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, which already gives us a fairly complete picture. Among white women with a bachelor's degree or better, only 2 percent of their children had been born out of wedlock as of 1993. These women were ages 28 to 36, with their most vulnerable years for out-of-wedlock childbearing behind them.

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[2] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements: March 1993*. Series P20-478, Table 6.

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Illegitimacy is not a problem worth mentioning among the overclass.[3]

What about the promiscuity and general carelessness in intimate relationships that is thought to be at the bottom of so many problems associated with the family? In one sense, the problem is as bad as the conventional wisdom says it is. The content of popular music, magazines, films, and television is drenched with casual, promiscuous, and adulterous sex, and, as William Bennett has recently been emphasizing, it often takes violent and otherwise perverse forms.

But, in terms of American private behavior, the underlying reality seems to be oddly healthy. After 50 years, we finally have a large, careful, nationally representative study to update the Kinsey Report. Entitled *The Social Organization of Sexuality*,[4] it tells us that the average American woman has just two sex partners during her lifetime. Homosexuals constitute fewer than 3 percent of adults. Marital fidelity is rampant and is rewarded: Married and faithful partners report more active and satisfying sex lives than the unmarried and promiscuous. Nor do these results vary much by race or socioeconomic class. It is true that numerically small sociological subgroups with high proportions of homosexuals and heterosexual "recreationals" exist. Perhaps the recreationals are disproportionately represented in the media circles that tell us what American sex is supposedly like. But, if you are thinking about the run-of-the-mill American, his or her sexual practices are probably remarkably traditional.

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[3] The story regarding marriage is very different for well-educated whites and well-educated blacks. Only 63 percent of all black children (ages 18 and under) of parents with college degrees live with two parents (compared to 91 percent of whites). In the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, 41 percent of the children of black women with college degrees are born out of wedlock (compared to less than 2 percent of whites). This state of affairs in well-educated black families presumably will have reverberating effects on many economic and social outcomes in the next generation.

[4] See Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels, *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). This work was also published in a popular edition; see Robert T. Michael, John H. Gagnon, Edward O. Laumann, and Gina Kolata, *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey* (New York: Little, Brown, 1995).

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Married with children

What should we expect for the future? Regarding the culture's attitude toward things sexual, one possibility is that the public presentation of sex will become more restrained and conservative, as we may expect if we do nothing more than extrapolate from past experience. In the last few centuries of English and American life, license has consistently been followed by prudery. On the contemporary scene, part of the feminist left has already become prudish to the point of caricature, both in its campaign against sexually explicit material and its attempts to establish strict, enforceable codes defining consensual sex.

When it comes to marriage and family, we needn't appeal just to historical precedent or fringe political groups to expect a rejuvenation of traditional values. Here are two hopeful propositions I draw from the current situation.

First, I take it as a truth, not subject to historical vagaries, that monogamous marriage with children really is, in the long run and for most people, the most satisfying framework for living a human life. For whatever evolutionary or spiritual reasons, this is the way human beings are. If so, then the surges in the divorce rate and in illegitimacy over the last 30 years are aberrational, a kind of social "time of troubles." We do not need to restore marriage through some clever solution; all we have to do is stop doing the foolish things that have impeded marriage.

The things that have impeded marriage may be broadly classified into two groups: impediments caused by intellectual and cultural fashion, on the one hand, and concrete public policies (e.g., no-fault divorce laws and the welfare system), on the other. Assessing the state of affairs as of 1995, it seems to me that the intellectual and cultural hostility to marriage has already drastically diminished while the concrete public policies remain effectively unchanged.

The most dramatic example of a shift in intellectual and cultural trends involves illegitimacy. As recently as the early 1990s and the famous Murphy Brown episode, large chunks of the media and academia were ready to ridicule people who said that having a baby outside marriage was wrong. But the Murphy Brown episode was itself the catalyst for a national

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rethinking of astonishing proportions. By now, it is difficult to find any major figure in the media or in academia who argues that having a baby outside marriage is *not* wrong.

A similar shift in attitude is occurring toward divorce. In the 1970s, the idea of staying together for the sake of the children was widely and vocally dismissed as outmoded. The partners' happiness and self-expression were taken to be more important. It was asserted without much empirical foundation that a divorce was better for the children than staying in a house with two bickering parents. This attitude is no longer prevalent, partly because of growing scholarly evidence showing that staying together for the sake of the children often works, but also because the notion of treating marriage as an experiment to be ended whenever it's not enough fun any more has fallen out of fashion, especially when children are involved.

Bringing these strands together: The long-term rewards of monogamous marriage have remained real all along. The temporary aberrations in intellectual life that tried to deny or obscure those rewards are fading. Traditional ideas about the importance of raising children with two parents are reasserting themselves. The overclass is absorbing these messages. The policy impediments to marriage never mattered very much to them anyway; for if you have enough money, your calculations about marriage and divorce are little affected by divorce law (as long as divorce is legal) and not at all affected by the welfare system. Ergo, there is reason to be optimistic about marriage and children for the overclass.

The joys of motherhood

My second proposition forecasting good news for the family among the overclass is that a positive kind of feminism has achieved victory, thereby liberating some women—especially those with money—to be traditional mothers and wives if they feel like it.

Prior to the feminist revolution that began in the late 1960s, women faced many economic, professional, and social barriers that were artificial and deserved overthrowing. It was also impossible that these should be overthrown in a measured and temperate way. Successful revolutions require revolutionary

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ardor, and revolutionary ardor spills over the banks. Like all revolutions, this one had many casualties. A generation of young women not only had to face the conflicts that naturally accompany choices between career and family but had to face them in an era when the roles of traditional wife and mother were derisively attacked.

Such attacks were bound to fade because they were so profoundly wrongheaded. Staying home to care for one's small children is, in fact, enormously rewarding—not necessarily more rewarding for every woman than a career, but sufficiently so for many. This overriding reality has been asserting itself for some years. One clue comes from psychologists who run support groups for women with infants. In the early 1980s, I am told, they saw mothers in their groups competing to see who could get back to work the soonest after the child was born. By the late 1980s, they more often saw career mothers envying the women who had the luxury of staying home with their babies.

I also encounter hopeful signs from my observation post as the father of two young women in their twenties. For them and their friends, a career is still important. But it is also considered normal to think that babies are adorable and normal to imagine staying home for awhile to take care of them. Other clues may be found in the trends in female employment, which show evidence of adaptive behavior—part-time employment or temporary interruptions in careers—that permit women to combine work with motherhood. As for mothers' attitudes toward day care, read the newspapers, listen to the talk shows, and talk to your neighbors. The dominant theme is not that women are at peace with sending their children to a day-care center, if only they can find a good one, but that women are unhappy about leaving their children all day and want to find a way to focus on being mothers of their small children.

So, even though the statistical trendlines on day care have yet to turn around, I am willing to bet that staying home to care for small children will gain in popularity in the years to come among those women who can afford it financially. But many blue-collar families cannot. Thus the half-optimistic projection. Full-time parental care for small children will make a

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comeback but most particularly in the most affluent part of the society.

The opening of the American mind

Turning to education, it is once again important to begin by recalling the good news in the current situation. In the 10 years since the Reagan administration made headlines with "A Nation at Risk," virtually every measure indicates that secondary education has become more demanding, with the proportion of graduates taking advanced science and mathematics courses showing especially sharp increases. Measures of achievement have also shown significant improvements in math and science (though not in verbal skills).

The continuing problems with elementary and secondary education, and there are many, tend to be in places where the overclass isn't. Since the late 1960s, when racial and social politics began to play havoc with public education, parents who care about the education of their children and have the resources to do something about it have become adept in working around the system. They put their children in private schools. They move to suburbs where the public schools are run to their liking. They pay for tutoring services. They educate their children at home. One way or another, they make sure that their own children get a decent education, and the schools they prefer tend to provide that education in highly traditional ways: tough curriculum, lots of homework, firm discipline. It seems safe to forecast that these trends will only get stronger in the years to come.

The complaints about the university tend to center on the degree to which many faculties in law, sociology, political science, psychology, literature, and the fine arts are peopled by the tenured radicals of the 1960s who have deformed their disciplines accordingly. When historian Gertrude Himmelfarb writes, in *On Looking Into the Abyss*, about the horrors of postmodernism among college faculties, I not only accept the accuracy of her description but can testify from my own experience speaking on college campuses: There is within our universities a significant number of faculty who are every bit as indifferent to the ethics of scholarship, hostile to the concept of truth, and often plain silly, as Himmelfarb and others have

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portrayed them to be. But, looking to the near future, there are reasons to be optimistic.

First, the tenured radicals have reached middle age, and they are increasingly going to become figures of fun. It is not just that they, like all middle-aged adults, are inherently unable to keep up with the music, language, and *Zeitgeist* of the young. They also are vulnerable to the same charge they leveled at their elders in the 1960s: irrelevancy. What does a social democrat clinging to the ideals of the Rawlsian state have to say to a youngster in the post-Reagan, post-Cold War era? What does a social activist who has spent a lifetime being hostile to business and technology have to say to a generation that aspires to business school and lives on the Internet? Granted, even the tenured radicals have their acolytes; but they are a tiny minority of the campus population. The more I see of the tenured radicals and their allies, the more obvious it seems to me that they are a spent force. Their vision is passionless. They haven't a clue about what has really happened to American politics. They haven't the psychological capacity to adapt to the new economy and the new technology. They are too humorless to be popular and too frightened of risk to be leaders.

Two other fundamental and (I hope) unstoppable forces are at work to restore the humanities and the social sciences in the university. The "practice" of being a university professor is to produce intellectual work of high quality. "High quality" is defined ultimately by other professors in the same field. Though it may take a while, "high quality" for any given field, even in the humanities and social sciences, eventually comes to be defined in terms of genuine intellectual rigor and validity. Much of the deconstructionism, postmodernism, and multiculturalism that infests part of the university community is vulnerable to the most damning criticism of all: It is dumb. The arguments are based on false assumptions, the empiricism is sloppy, the logic doesn't stand up to close examination. The works of such scholars seldom constitute authentic intellectual achievement. I am optimistic enough to assume that, over time, the foolishness of the postmodernists will be exposed by the university's version of the competitive marketplace.

The other fundamental force for restoring the university

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applies specifically to the humanities, and is as simple as can be: The great works of art are genuinely great, not merely labeled so by arbitrary opinion. For most people drawn to the life of the university, the reason one can enjoy spending a lifetime studying and teaching about literature or music or art is because of the intrinsic beauty of the things being studied. Reading *The Tempest* to deconstruct it is not nearly as satisfying as reading *The Tempest* for what it offers the mind and soul. Ergo, over not too much more time, the Jacques Derridas of the university will fade away and young Harold Blooms will replace them.

The fear of death and God

Irving Kristol has once again seen sooner and more clearly than just about anyone else. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* of June 13, 1995, he described the social or religious conservatives as a movement in the tradition of the religious "awakenings" that played such an important role in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American history. As an example, he cited the "Promise Keepers," all-day Christian convocations of men gathering to pray and to vow, among other things, to adhere steadfastly to marital fidelity, their parental duties, and their obligations to neighbors and community. Founded only four years ago, more than half a million men will attend meetings this summer alone. "Something is going on out there," Kristol wrote, continuing:

> Always surprising when they occur, such religious revivals seem inevitable in retrospect. Just as there is a business cycle we don't quite understand, so there seems to be a comparable spiritual cycle that we don't understand. After more than a century of militant secularism, hedonism, and materialism, all leading to a carnivalistic nihilism, a religious revival of some kind is in line with historical precedent. It is happening now.

Amen. Let me add just one thought: This religious awakening is not going to be limited to a blue-collar crowd. It is going to extend through all the social classes, including the overclass. One reason for so thinking parallels my reasoning throughout this presentation: Just as marriage really is the most satisfying framework for living a human life, and just as

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the greatest works of art really are the most profoundly enjoyable, so too the need for a spiritual dimension to life really is intrinsic to the human condition, and the world's great religions are the enduring means of satisfying that need.

Another reason has to do with the demographics of the baby boom. It has been possible for the last three decades to make fairly good predictions about social trends on the basis of what phase of life the baby boomers will reach in the next few years. Over the next five years, the older baby boomers will be reaching 50 and, as tends to happen at 50, will suddenly understand deep in their gut that mortality is no longer just a theoretical possibility. Thinking about death tends to concentrate the mind wonderfully on things spiritual, and I imagine it will tend to hit all the harder among people who have neglected such topics until now. Among the overclass, the result will not necessarily be revivalism, but I am confident that their participation in, and respect for, religion is about to rise sharply. Combine that with the mass awakening Kristol discerns, and you are looking at the potential for drastic change throughout the culture on all kinds of dimensions.

The dangers of a partial restoration

In sum, I am looking forward to the restoration of a culture in which family, parenthood, the life of the mind, morality, and the virtues are all perceived and valued in ways that our grandparents would find familiar. That *The Book of Virtues* has been on the best-seller list for more than a year and a half is just a harbinger of wonderful things to come. It will not be long (you read it here first) before the concepts of "gentleman" and "lady" once again become governing norms for behavior in parts of American society.

But that specification, "parts of American society," points to the problem. It requires suspension of disbelief to think of the prospects I have described as wholly good news, else the thought intrudes: What about the rest of the country? How can white, affluent, and well-educated America be doing just fine if black or poor or ill-educated America is not?

The short answer to that question is that somehow the whole country must eventually participate in the restoration. As Richard Herrnstein and I argued in *The Bell Curve*, we

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think the horrific alternative to bringing the whole country along is a new kind of class society in America, divisive and ultimately destructive of American democracy.

I have a fair amount of confidence that the bulk of the country will participate. The religious awakening is being led by the middle and working classes, not the overclass. The impulse for educational reform draws deeply from the sense of middle-class and blue-collar parents that the schools have been failing them. Traditional values regarding marriage, fidelity, and parenthood have found their safest refuge during our time of troubles in the middle-class, blue-collar, and rural communities that the intelligentsia sometimes refers to as "fly-over country." Indeed, there is irony in my focus on the overclass. Its members have been the cause of much of the deterioration in the culture, and it seems unfair that they are going to find it easiest, once they have changed their minds, to readopt the cultural patterns they once undermined.

Unfair, but true. Like it or not, the white, affluent, highly educated, and high-IQ Americans who comprise most of the overclass also have the resources to shape their own environments to their liking far more easily than can any other social group. It just so happens that now they want to shape their environments in ways which are increasingly healthy and positive. The positive aspect of this for the rest of the country is that, though the overclass is a numerically small minority, its influence on cultural norms is vast. Once it ratifies a set of values, those are the ones that will be portrayed in films, endorsed on prime-time sitcoms, used as the subtext for features on the evening news shows, and that, ultimately, will become the basis for the social sanctions and rewards that control behavior so much more effectively than laws.

As these norms of the larger society change, one may plausibly hope that they will change behavior everywhere, including behavior in the underclass. Thus, for example, the concrete policy impediments to marriage may remain unchanged for the poor, and yet marriage among the poor might nonetheless make a comeback because of powerful changes in social norms associated with marriage that have originated elsewhere. It is not at all clear that this optimistic scenario will prevail, however. One may instead argue that changes in tech-

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nology and the economy are going to intensify economic stratification, reinforcing social and cultural stratification as well. The affluent and well-educated will have more incentive than ever to live apart from the rest of society, by this logic, and the poor will have less incentive than ever to conform to social norms that have no obvious payoff.

But I promised to sidestep the bad news for just once and, in any case, trying to make a case for one scenario or another is premature. There will be time enough for that during the next 30 years of *The Public Interest*.

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